

EDAY MARTIN

# INTO THE BREACH

The Emergency Training Scheme  
for Teachers



TURNSTILE PRESS

## INTO THE BREACH

During the war, the Government realized that in order to maintain existing schools and to implement even the first stages of the 1944 Education Act a vast number of teachers would have to be trained quickly to fill the gap. An emergency scheme was therefore launched to supplement the existing training facilities by setting up new Emergency Training Colleges for providing the necessary training in a fraction of the time formerly available.

This book explains how the scheme was planned, students and staff selected, buildings ranging from castles to hut-encampments were adapted, and how courses of study were evolved with much original work and related group activities by the students. The scheme completed emerges as an amazing feat of large-scale improvisation. Through it nearly 40,000 men and women, selected from over 100,000 applicants, have been trained as teachers and are now at work in the schools.

Many interesting issues were raised by the scheme: Should colleges be residential or non-residential? Co-educational or otherwise? Sited in town or in country? Can Emergency Training be applied profitably to other professions? The author discusses all these points and more especially considers how far the scheme provided experience useful in adult education generally.

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On wrapper: The opening of Wall Hall Emergency Training College.  
[The Times photograph.]

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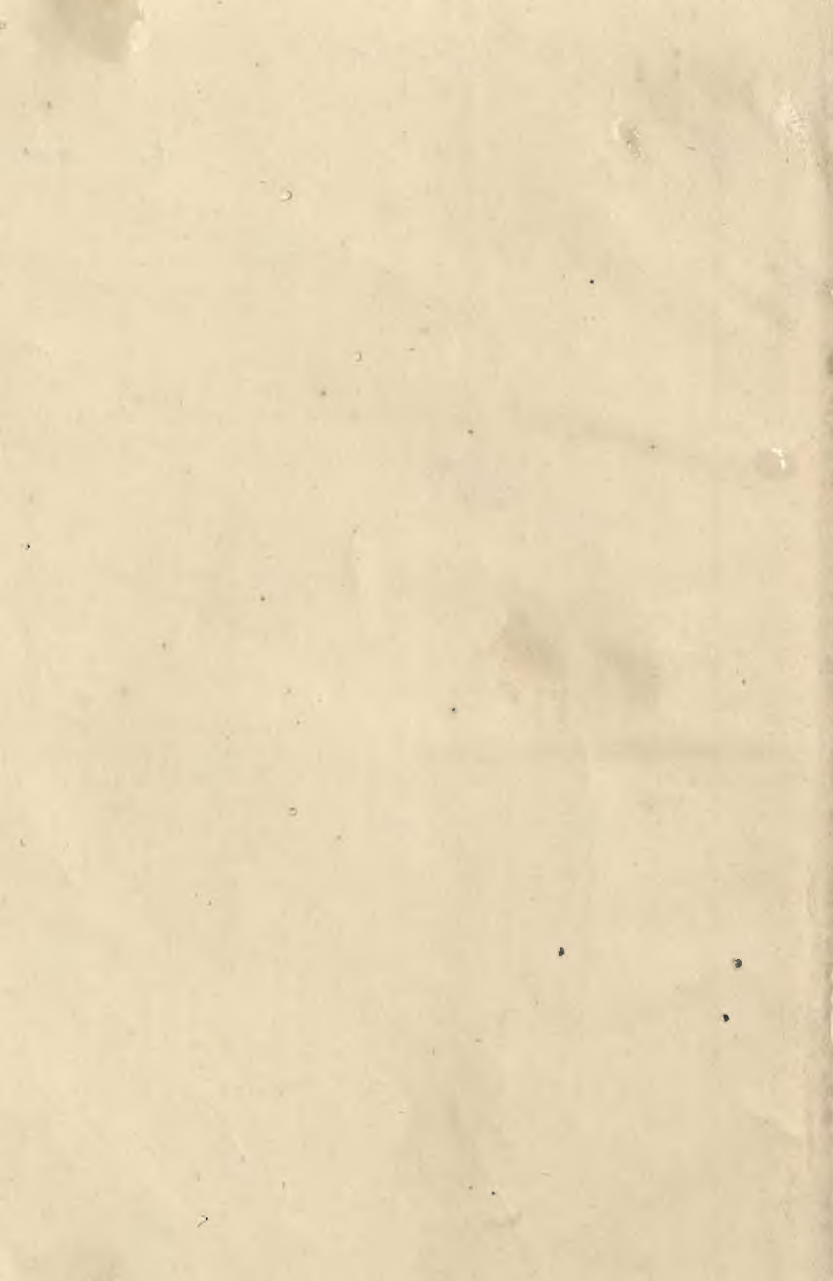
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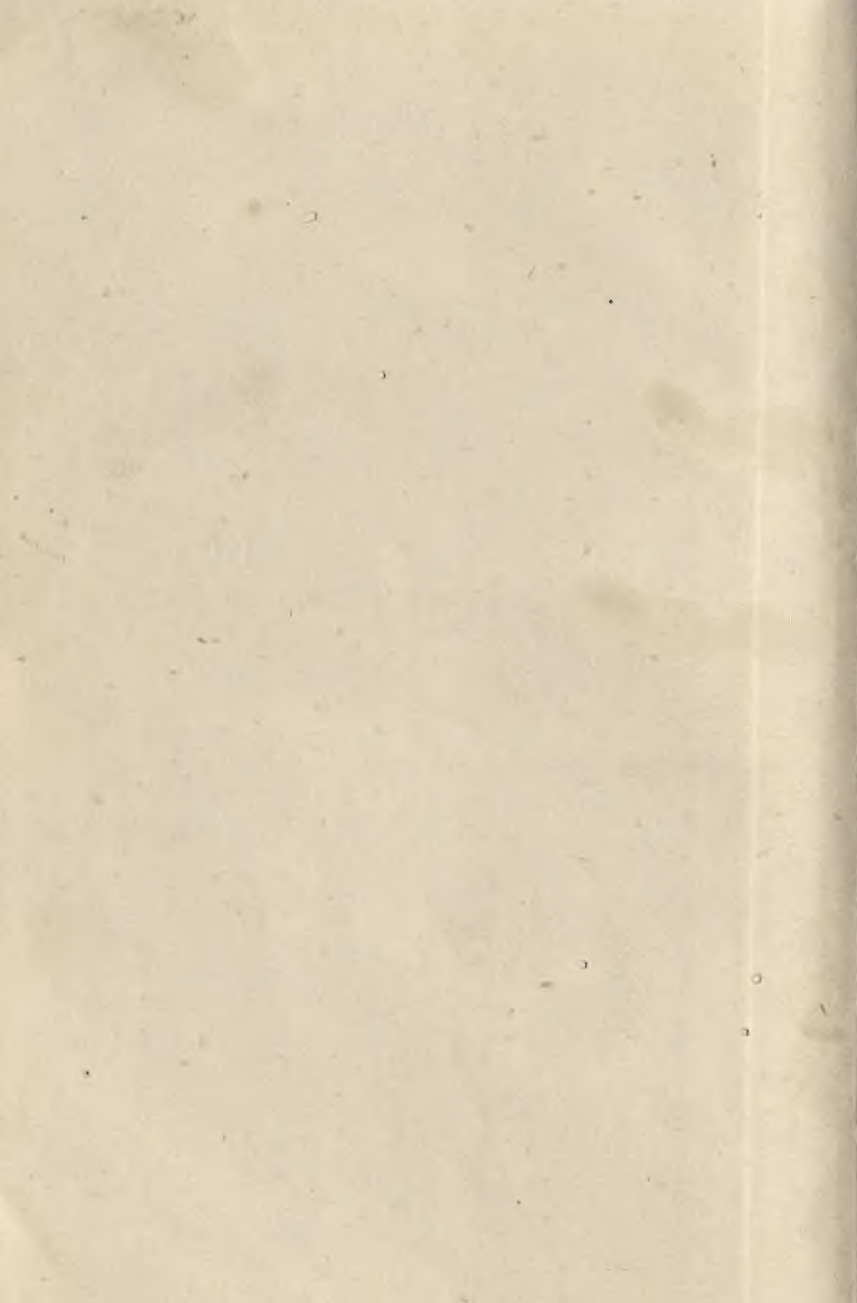
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C. I.





INTO THE BREACH



# INTO THE BREACH

THE EMERGENCY TRAINING SCHEME  
FOR TEACHERS

by

LOVEDAY MARTIN

*We cannot restore old policies  
Or follow an antique drum.*

T. S. ELIOT



TURNSTILE PRESS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WOULD like to record my deep appreciation of the unstinted help received during my exploratory visits to the Emergency Training Colleges, from Principals, staffs and students. The gracious hospitality extended to me in the colleges, all over the country, will also remain a living memory.

My thanks are also due to Mr. G. N. Flemming and other officers of the Ministry of Education for helpful information; to the author and Messrs. Faber & Faber Ltd., for permission to quote on the title page two lines from Mr. T. S. Eliot's poem, *Little Gidding*; to Miss Anne Garnier for valuable secretarial help, and to my son John for reading the proofs and for his helpful suggestions.

To

HAROLD

with grateful thanks for all his help and  
encouragement

## PREFACE

TOWARDS the end of the last war, it became apparent that the schools of this country faced a crisis unparalleled in the history of British education. On the near horizon there loomed starkly a gap of many thousands between the numbers of teachers required and those who would be available.

The reasons for this were the war casualties (including those anticipated during the final stages of the war) the greatly diminished number of teachers trained during the war, and the huge task of embodying in actual achievement the reforms of the Education Act, 1944. This Act called for an increase of at least 70,000 in the number of teachers in the publicly maintained primary and secondary schools.

This crisis in the schools was, in the nature of things, non-recurrent; and its pressure was immediate. It was not possible that the normal training arrangements could produce these thousands of teachers in time. A bold and imaginative step had to be taken, and taken quickly, and an attempt made to dam the breach, yet without the sacrifice of standards.

Impossible? One object of this short book, in telling the story of the Emergency Training Colleges for teachers, is to show that faith was justified, and that those who were trained in them are, on balance, fully comparable—and indeed in some directions even superior—to the normal.

In the past, recognized entry to the teaching profession was through one of three doors. There was the university graduate who, having given three years to study for his degree, took a further year's professional training. From these highly qualified men and women were drawn the staffs of grammar schools. But by far the greater number of teachers came from the training colleges; whose course, usually two years in duration, combined general and professional education, and culminated in the teachers' 'certificate', granted by the Board of Education. It was also possible to be accepted as an 'uncertificated' (i.e. untrained) teacher, provided that one had the requisite minimum

academic qualification, which was normally the School Certificate.

It might be thought that the Board of Education would have been tempted to jump its dilemma by increasing, temporarily, the ranks of the unqualified. But not for a moment did it weaken in its original resolve that the new teachers must be satisfactorily trained and capable of becoming permanent assets to the profession. It opened special colleges—the Emergency Training Colleges—all over the country, for the intensive training in twelve months and by new methods, of students more mature in years and experience of life than the normal entrant. These students were (almost) exclusively drawn from the Services or the war industries.

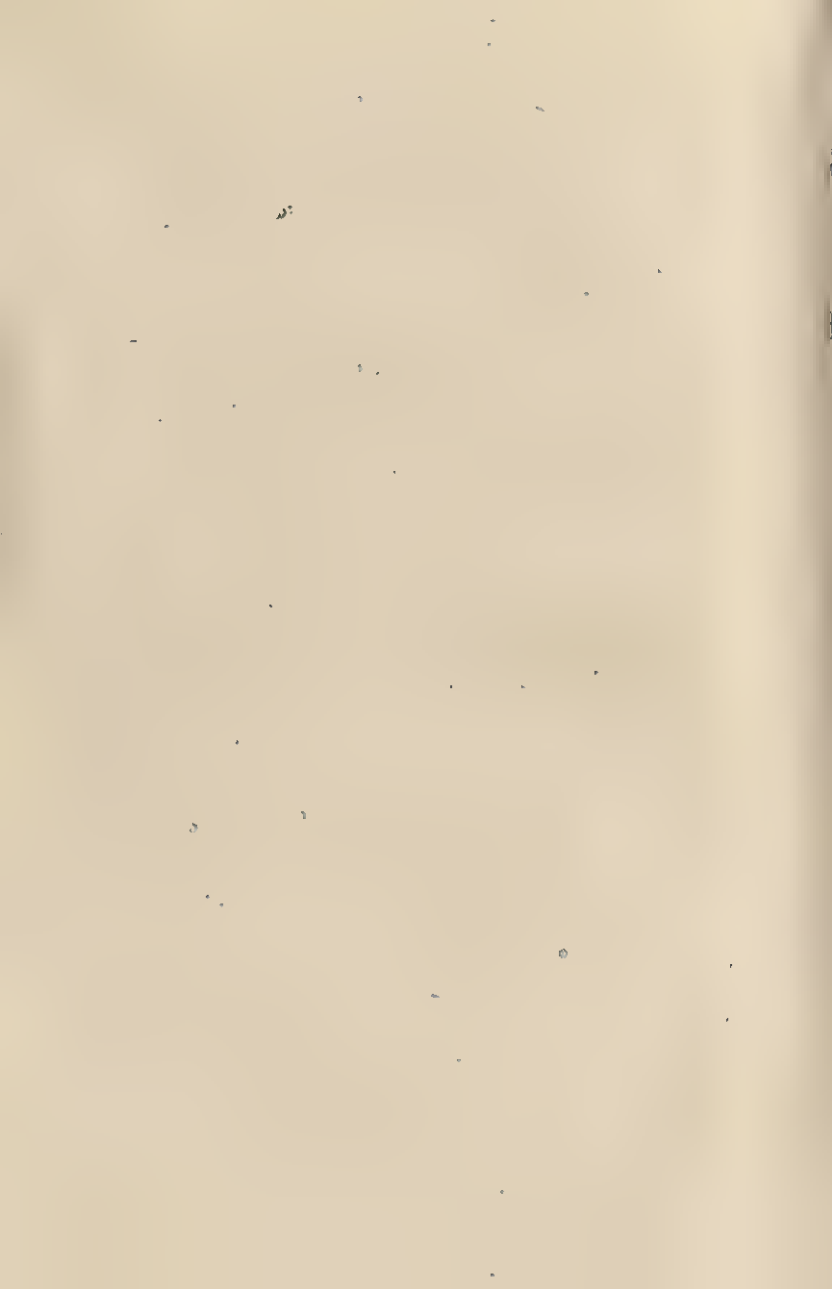
The following chapters, telling the story of this experiment—a controversial, exhilarating and (to a very great degree) a ‘success’ story—have been written by one who first became attracted to the study of these colleges while visiting them on behalf of an educational journal, as dramatic critic, but who subsequently spent a considerable time in a more general study of their work.

The result is offered in the hope of opening a discussion on the special problems and advantages of training the older recruit to teaching; of being of some slight assistance to other countries where the teacher shortage is so incomparably more serious than here; and to indicate some of the directions in which a similarly bold and incisive policy might have avoided present acute shortages in other professions, particularly in nursing.

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## Chapter I

### THE SCHEME OUTLINED

Not always have Government departments been conspicuous for such vision and courage as were shown by the Board of Education when, in 1943, it launched its scheme for the emergency training of teachers. But it is doubtful whether even the Board itself realized, at the time, the full significance of its own experiment. That this has been the means of discovering much new data highly relevant to all forms of teacher training has now been widely acknowledged. It is probably not yet sufficiently realized that the scheme was also to provide a potential research laboratory for the whole question of training for the professions those who may wish to enter them later in life than the normal age.

The faculty for doing great things by accident has often been attributed to the English by foreigners. But this faculty is far more probably the result of intuitive knowledge, and when, in the House of Commons on Thursday, 21 October 1943, Mr. R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education, announced this scheme of the Government's, there is now no doubt that once more this country, galvanized by necessity and prepared to adventure, was on the verge of another of its great intuitive discoveries. It is quite extraordinary, on glancing back to the press of that time, to find how little and infrequent was any comment on the scheme, either from the public or the teaching profession. The mind of the public was, of course, primarily occupied with the war, and the attention of teachers concentrated on the huge educational reforms embodied in the forthcoming Education Bill which was introduced into Parliament two months later (16 December 1943). These were no doubt the main reasons why the scheme slipped so silently into operation. But the fact remains that its significance was observed at the time by hardly anyone.

The problem before the Board can be stated very simply. In the words of Circular 1652, which it issued on 15 May 1944:

'Many thousands of additional teachers will be needed as quickly as possible after the war, to make good the loss of new intake during the war years.'

There were two possible methods of producing these new teachers; by expanding the normal methods of recruitment and training, or by devising a new scheme on original lines. Actually the Board adopted both these methods, but the great bulk of the extra teachers was secured through its new and original form of training. The scheme devised for this was briefly outlined in a note issued in May 1944 by the Board of Education, the Scottish Education Department, and the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education, to help officers in the Services in dealing with inquiries.

The central feature of the scheme was the provision of one-year courses of training. Before the war the normal course leading to recognition as a certificated teacher lasted two years, but for the men and women of maturer age and wider experience for whom this scheme was designed it was felt that a twelve-months' course should suffice. The courses were to be conducted in the main in colleges set up for the purpose, to provide opportunities for study and reading under expert tuition and for live contact with the schools. Some of the colleges were to be residential, others day colleges for students living in their own homes or in lodgings.

The conception of the emergency recruitment and training scheme was statesmanlike in the best sense of that term, allying the sense of responsibility with a spirit of adventure. From the first its sponsors turned their backs on compromise of any sort, insisting that the field of recruitment was to be as wide as possible, and that these students, when trained, were to be regarded as fully qualified teachers, to receive the same pay as their normally trained colleagues, and, after a probationary period of two years, to be granted full professional status.

The scheme's success owed much to the initial planning of its administration and its content by an advisory committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. G. N. Flemming of the Board of Education, and representative of the Board, the local education authorities and the teachers, which the Board's president appointed in December 1943. The interim report of

this committee (Board of Education Circular 1652) impresses the reader with its comprehensiveness and its suggested solutions for minimizing and even, in some respects, turning to advantage the difficulties inseparable from so short a training as had been proposed. The committee concluded that:

'... after considering the type of course to be provided we have reached the conclusion that the proposed provision of one-year courses for mature students from H.M. Forces and other forms of National Service is not only necessary but practicable, *if the right candidates are selected*. . . ?' (The italics are the author's.)

But to ensure that teachers trained under the emergency scheme should have 'a sufficient background of general education and culture to enable them to become worthy members of the teaching profession', and that they should not be regarded as inferiors by normally trained teachers, the committee thought that the Board of Education should require them, after their intensive course, 'to follow for the next two years a course of part-time study'. (The teacher from a two-year training college is on probation for one year only, and further study during this year has rarely been officially required.)

The report laid down broad general suggestions for the building of a syllabus in accordance with these principles. It advised that, as the emergency trained students were not to be regarded as stop-gaps to tide over a crisis, while their study should be directed mainly to professional training, there should also be, for every student, a course of personal education. This, the committee thought, should include practice in the usage of the English language, and some study of cultural subjects to be selected by the student in consultation with his or her college tutor.

No advice in the whole report proved wiser than this. One college Principal after another has emphasized that, while professional training is, of course, essential, it has been this personal education which has brought to birth unsuspected powers and qualities in their students.

The outside observer, too, cannot but feel convinced that this release of creative power in many students made a main, perhaps the outstanding, contribution to the success of emergency

training. These students, so long absent from any formal education and so variously equipped academically, responded to this *personal* approach to their individual needs like the human organism to ozone. Again and again came the astonished exclamations: 'I'd no idea I could do this'; 'My progress in modern languages staggers me'; 'I always thought I had no ear for music'; 'If anyone told me six months ago that I should develop an interest in science, I shouldn't have believed it possible'.

There were numerous students like the girl who, having previously had no interest in poetry, was asked to study, as part of her personal education, a lyric poet, anyone she liked. She chose Keats, and her reaction was said to be akin to Keats's own, when he first looked into Chapman's Homer. Educationists who are gravely concerned over the narrow specialization of our national education, tending, as it does, to develop yet further the already over-developed sides of brain and character and leaving to atrophy the embryonic ones, must surely find much cause for encouragement in this gentle leading of the emergency students towards their own fuller development.

Working from this idea, it is exciting to imagine how the poetic mind could be attracted to mathematics, for the first time, through a glimpse of the romance and poetry to be found in this subject. There have been some recent broadcasts which in this respect were a revelation to the uninitiated. Or again, the scientific mind might be attracted to poetry through such poems as Sidney Keyes's *The Buzzard*, which fascinates by its brilliant geometrical shapes and construction, and its **scientific precision**.

The advisory committee's report gave a suggested division of time for the fifty-two weeks of the course; of this the notable feature was the large proportion of time allowed for observation and teaching practice in schools. Another extremely important proposal, much criticized at the time, was that 'the work of the students should be assessed on the basis of internal tests for which the staff of the college would be responsible' and that 'a formal external examination of the usual type would not be desirable'. The tests ought, in the committee's opinion, to



be subject to external check and the Board of Education must be responsible for the national standard.

The teaching staffs of the colleges were to be drawn from the schools as well as the training colleges. The colleges, it was recommended, should be planned for about two hundred students each, and should be situated, when possible, near large cities or towns.

The report contained also proposals for the withdrawal of students considered unsuitable, for the further training of the weak or the specially gifted, and for the organization of the two-year period of probationary study. All in all, it was an admirable piece of planning, to which perhaps the best tribute has been that its proposals were never substantially departed from.

On the whole, recruitment was admirably carried through, except that the large increase in the birth-rate was apparently overlooked (full official statistics were not, of course, available during the war) with the consequence that not nearly enough provision was made at the beginning for the training of women students who would specialize in infant and nursery school work.

It needs not the imagination of a poet to glimpse the dangers of what amounted to a blind leap into the unknown. Heavy responsibility lay on those who conceived and launched the scheme, as well as a multiplicity of wearing detail and incessant unforeseeable complications. It could hardly have been otherwise, since, instead of following history, they were making it.

What were these dangers? Implicit throughout Circular 1652 is the realization of three chief ones. A college Principal summed them up as an educational one; that the emergency students' standard of academic attainment would not be high enough; a professional one; that they might not make good teachers; and a personal one; that they might not make good colleagues.

It was natural, too, that the scheme should arouse—as indeed it did—considerable hostility, both within the teaching profession and outside. Bearing in mind even the obvious dangers—and there were many concealed ones—this could scarcely have been otherwise. At first sight, it did indeed seem unjust that teachers with only one year's training should rank

equally with those who had had two or three. Teachers sometimes criticize the scheme, and yet the introductory paragraphs of Circular 1652 shows clearly that their professional organizations were represented on the advisory committee and fully consulted on the question. It should be added that this hostility did not extend to the official representatives of the teachers' associations.

As to the opposition from lay people and teachers alike, it is fair to ask what would have been *their* solution to meet the position? Admittedly, Scotland decided to have a minimum of two years' training, but the training facilities and procedures there are very different from those in England and Wales. Scotland could accommodate all her additional students in her existing training centres. Had England attempted to do so the number of new teachers needed could not possibly have been trained for many years. After all, the Board of Education had to provide against a crisis unparalleled in our educational history, and this at a time when, because of the anticipated unsettled home conditions during the transition period from war to peace, a stable school background would be even more than normally important for the child. It took the only possible way.

The bulk of this criticism came in fact from members of the profession and the public who had apparently not taken the trouble to inform themselves of the purpose and content of the scheme. It is true that, before the colleges actually opened, there was some doubt and anxiety in high places. But, once the colleges had started work, and results began to be available for provisional assessment, educationalists and politicians alike sat up and rubbed their eyes in astonished admiration. Rare indeed has it been to find a destructive critic of the colleges who was in a position to judge of them authoritatively. In the present writer's experience, no one really qualified to pronounce on the scheme, whether H.M. inspectors, teachers or local authority officials, has criticized it adversely. Again and again, such detractors as have raised their voices have been found to be people who have never been inside an emergency college or read the relevant documents.

What would have happened had the emergency scheme not come into being? Three results are suggested:

1. Instead of classes of 40 and 50 children—grim enough numbers in all conscience—there would have been classes of 60, 70 or even more; and infants would, because of the increased birth-rate already referred to, have suffered most.

2. The school-leaving age could not have been raised.

3. Educational standards in all schools would have dropped sharply and remained low indefinitely.

As it is, there is already heartening evidence from local education authorities, and in particular from investigations made by some of them in charge of areas that were heavily evacuated, that the retardation found in their schools at the end of the war (especially in the '3 Rs') of up to twelve months had, by 1949, not only been arrested, but that pre-war standards had been in large measure restored and, in some respects, even surpassed.

It was agreed by some critics that there would have to be a shortened training—yes, of course, they said, but the students so trained should be regarded as temporary makeshifts only, without either the status of teachers or the possibility of ever graduating to such status. In fact, that there should be created a kind of teaching orderly. This argument hardly needs refuting. Had such a course been followed, the right type of student would not have been attracted. The visitor to the colleges could not but be impressed by the high sense of vocation in most of the students towards their chosen calling. These men and women would have seen no future in a profession which refused to accept them wholly.

## Chapter 2

### EMERGENCY COLLEGES

AN idea of the response to the scheme is given by the fact that although **general** recruitment was only opened after the end of the war, by 2 May 1946 there was a total of 17,500 applicants, of whom 12,500 were women and 4,500 men. Of these 47,500 — 17,500 men and 4,500 women — had been accepted as suitable for training, 12,500 more — 14,500 men and 2,500 women — about 1,000 of whom were in the Forces overseas — were regarded as suitable for interview, and 10,000 had been rejected either because of unsuitability or inadequate National Service. There was another 2,500 about whom further information was awaited.

By the date, candidates were being interviewed in this country at the rate of 1,100 a week, and interviewing panels were being sent abroad to interview Forces candidates in the major overseas theatres of war. Applications were still being received at great numbers, and the Ministry of Education Circular 106, 22 May 1946, indicated its belief that the initial high quality of candidate was being maintained.

Anxiety was caused in these early days by disconcerting delays in the opening of the first emergency training colleges. Questions were asked in the House of Commons and the Minister was repeatedly asked to explain the delay. There was a very real danger that some of the best of the new recruits to teaching would be otherwise engaged by a long wait before they could become attracted to their career.

There were, of course, great difficulties to be solved by the Ministry, both in selecting suitable universities and, when found, in placing them. For a long time the Ministry tried to do too much on its own side, at any rate in December 1945, when the then Minister of Education, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, called the local education authorities into fuller co-operation, things

<sup>1</sup> The Board of Education became a Ministry on the passing of the Education Act 1944.

begin to move more quickly. It would seem to the outside observer only reasonable that the local authorities would know more about the possible buildings in their areas than anyone else. They co-operated closely with the Ministry, and suitable buildings, from then on, were steadily brought to its notice, and acquired.

On the whole, the college buildings were dignified, and some were of extreme beauty. The one charge that can be set, in respect of any of its features, be brought against the emergency training scheme—that of uniformity—was demonstrated even in its buildings. A dull uniformity might have been feared, a harsh, thrashing together of predominated hues, but the buildings created their own unity. From there arose one which were in groups of buildings, other blocks of Ministry of Labour hostels, ranged from those to a magnificent castle (Alnwick Castle, Northumberland).

There were also some beautiful country mansions. The one which housed Newland Park (Bucks.), for example, set as it is in the Chiltern Hills in its own 150-acre park, must in itself have been an inspiration to those who were trained there. Cooper's Hall (London), a large mansion in open country on a fine commanding view of the Thames, the seat of Runnymede, and Wood Hall (Oxford), was a delight to behold, and the advantage it possessed for social history and geography can be imagined. Wood Hall (Oxford) belonged to the Ministry by Lord Landisdown, and Wood Hall (Hereford) are further examples of country mansions set in their own parks. There were others.

It was a pity, however, that Leycester Green (Hereford), a mixed college and the largest of the emergency ones, which did magical out-work, should have been so grossly misused. Another mischievous change in its character came after its capture. The Kremen's course to meet, for one the least, that grossly exterior could hardly have added to the quality of life within its walls. The Kremen had, however, in common with the college previously referred to, pleasant and spacious grounds, ideal suited for the study of horticulture and rural science.

The Board of Education had advised (Circular 1932) that, though it would 'deprecate a high degree of specialization' in



any individual college, some colleges should plan their syllabus so as to cater for students wishing to teach in rural schools. Although inquiries have failed to establish that students with this intention were sent, as a matter of policy, to these country colleges, there was, at least, a considerable amount of rural bias discerned in their students and in their courses of study.

These colleges which were, frankly and unchained, just groups of huts, built, though outwardly so hideous, had, in some cases at least, certain potential advantages. It was found possible, for instance, at a number of colleges, to provide a separate study table under each of the students. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated, in spite of the evidence at some colleges that by no means all the students who were offered separate study tables used them. A fully developed person will need to be able to work out on his own, and if that need has not yet become conscious, as the time is it necessary that space be made for it to develop. In a school it was all too late to find out what students could do on their own. The very nature of the method of teaching at these colleges, and of the expense of providing it, made the opportunity somewhat inevitably without a separate study table. At the other end of the year, as time was passing, students were said to be sleeping in one dormitory. In view of the serious of disease in which certain aspects of the method

of teaching were involved, some of these 'barment' colleges was not a great success. As might be expected, the K. S. colleges were of this type. The contrast between the plain, finished exterior and the unimproved interior was extraordinary. In one of these colleges, for example, the unstandardized furniture had been found at a sale in a broken-down condition, and its poor condition seen. The price of the carpenter and the bricklayer were paid for the building, the reconstruction of the Principal's room, and the furniture of some of that college - as well as other things, were of a very rare beauty.

The training of students in these and many colleges, particularly in the intensive training, where every environmental aspect is help or hinder, need careful weighing. Obviously, the K. S. colleges had no one who was both accessible and adaptable, but a situation combining the advantages of town and

capital, and have been the chief. The reduced extent of the  
 trade, however, has not diminished the activity and energy of the  
 vessels, and the port is now a great resort for the commerce of the  
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It is a pity that the various committees have been so far apart in their views on the use of the word "nuclear". The various committees have not been able to agree on a common definition of the word "nuclear" and this is a pity. It is a pity that the various committees have not been able to agree on a common definition of the word "nuclear". It is a pity that the various committees have not been able to agree on a common definition of the word "nuclear".



## Chapter 3

## STUDENTS AND STAFF

The ages, previous experience, social status and background of the students in the university training colleges varied greatly. It would have been quite impossible for any teacher to handle these men and women in any type except individual. There was a noticeable absence of the "school norm" and her influence and respect as exemplified at the conventional

[illegible]

It would be, however, a pity to let a large proportion of the country go without an electric road as the scheme proposed is being seriously considered by the Ministry of Transport and the Board of Transport Commissioners. At the same time it is a pity that the Government have not been more energetic in their efforts to develop the electric road system, especially in the case of the London and South-Eastern Railway, where the Government have been so long in coming to a decision.

[illegible]

any rate in the 50's, because of their extreme seniority, did constitute a very special problem. At one women's college it was found that the age at which women students did best at this intensive training was about 27 to 28. The Principal of another women's college found that her least satisfactory students were the youngest—that is, the 21 and 22-year-olds. There is, of course, no contradiction between this finding and the previous ones; it merely gives point to the comments early in this chapter on the lower age limit fixed. From the evidence of many tutors in men's colleges there would seem to have been still more difficulty with the extremes of the older age range, the reason most frequently given being the 'closed mind' and 'set opinions' of these men.

The personal quality of the students, too, varied enormously; but there were, as constant factors, the richness and diversity of experience and background which provided the necessary climatic conditions for that 'cross-fertilization of theory and experience' regarded by Sir Richard Livingstone as so essential to a fully developed being; and which will surely make a very positive contribution towards the realization of the impassioned plea made by Sir John Maud, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education, for 'characters, not types' in these new teachers. It is now ten years since Sir Richard's famous phrase first broke on an excited educational world. That world had not long to wait for a practical demonstration of its truth. The emergency training scheme for teachers was to provide a full-scale experimental field in which its implications might be worked out. That, by itself, surely constitutes for the scheme a claim to a permanent place in educational history.

'Except at rare intervals of intellectual ferment,' wrote A. N. Whitehead, 'education in the past has been radically infected with inert ideas. That is why uneducated clever women, who have seen so much of the world, are in middle life so much the most cultured part of the community. They have been saved from this horrible burden of inert ideas.' (*The Aims of Education and other Essays*, p. 1.)

A contributing factor to the scheme's success is surely the fact that such a large proportion of emergency students, having left school in their early teens, had escaped this 'horrible bur-



den' under which those whose education had been prolonged too often suffered.

The minds of these emergency students, not having been scarred and pitted by this dead weight in early youth, had retained their elasticity. Consequently, when the instability of adolescence had steadied into maturity, some of the impressionable quality of youth remained. This synthesis should produce the ideal mature student.

Sir John Maud's appeal was apt, for it can hardly be denied that in the past the normal teachers' training colleges have tended to draw people of a type, and moreover, too frequently of a type not so much immature as immaturable. One critic unkindly put it that teaching attracted especially 'the temperamental and the timid', and, while the sweep of artistic exaggeration is not absent from this judgment, there is a grain of truth in it.

It was natural enough to expect that these new students would bring fresh vitality to the profession. Not only had they live contacts with and experience of reality outside the teaching world, but these contacts and experiences were often as different from each other as could well be. The ex-Colonel of Commandos, for instance, and the ex-medical student (whose training had been fatally broken by the war, but who was able to help the lecturer on physiology and anatomy) might be extreme examples, and even more so the erstwhile nun from a French order, of a 'rare spiritual quality' and, of course, with perfect French; but the influence of even a small proportion of such men and women was far-reaching in the colleges and will be still more so in the schools.

The main body of students came from the Forces (including prisoner-of-war camps, both German and Japanese), from the Civil Service and other clerical jobs, from industry, shops and factories. Among them were 'Bevin boys', ex-student nurses, librarians, local government clerks, insurance agents, café managers, mannequins, actors and shop assistants of all sorts. Few occupations, indeed, were unrepresented.

Let it be faced that there was some degree of mediocrity among the rank and file of the students—though even these mid-level students helped, by their various and direct experi-

ence of life, to break that old, dreary circle of in-breeding—school to college and back to school. There were even some who came because they had the curious idea that teaching is a 'soft job'. But inquiries at many colleges revealed that the 'scroungers' were quite rare birds.

This tendency towards mediocrity could hardly have been avoided among so many thousands of recruits—as one observer put it: 'You can't alter the fact that the greatest number of people do come into this category.' Nor is the situation improved by the fact that neither in salary nor in social status does teaching rank as high as many other professions. This is not the place to discuss why that should be so but one cannot help reflecting how revolutionary the consequences would be both in the schools and the country at large if the body of teachers were of the very highest quality.

It is, then, fair to say that, while the personal quality and endowments of many emergency students left room for improvement, they did represent a solid advance on the old, somewhat depressing type of entrant. They were, indeed, 'characters, not types'. So far, so good.

A considerable proportion of the students were married and a number had children. While fatherhood is the way, *par excellence*, by which a man may gradually fathom a child's mind, the admission of married *women* students was of far greater significance for the profession, because of the effect, in the past, of the marriage bar for women teachers. This had slammed the school doors in the faces of those very women who, because of their direct knowledge through their own children, had graduated into people of very special value to the children of others. This is not to say, however, that it was wise to accept (as was done) women students with very young children. Marj will agree with the Principal of a large college who said that, because of the divided loyalties it caused, for such women the course imposed too great a strain, and moreover, that their duty was obviously elsewhere. (Exceptions to this judgment could, of course, be made in special and necessitous cases.)

Well might the irrepressible Olympian gods have 'shaken with unquenchable laughter', and a more pitying deity have

wept, to see in the first term of a large women's emergency training college young mothers of infants being solemnly instructed, at a lecture on elementary psychology, about the harm done to young children by separation from their mothers.

Under the emergency scheme students had to pay no tuition or boarding fees, and they were eligible for maintenance grants graded according to their varying needs and responsibilities during the course of training and with due regard to their own financial resources. There was some criticism, both ill-natured and ill-informed, about these students' living grants, the suggestion being that they were over-generous. As many of the students had no other means of support, this is scarcely worth answering, except to state that the standard weekly allowance was £2, with another 10s. per week allowed to cover the cost of books, etc. All personal expenses—clothes, travel, holidays and incidentals—had to be met out of this grant, which, as one student put it, 'has made first-class mathematicians of us all'. A much more serious matter was that in the early days the payment of many grants was seriously delayed, causing acute anxiety and often hardship to students.

Before being selected for interview, candidates were asked to supply information as to the schools and other full-time educational institutions they had attended, with dates and examinations passed; particulars of civil employment if any, and part-time education in civil life, whether of a general or vocational character. Any teaching done in civil life whether professional or voluntary, and any other work with young people, was taken into consideration as was also a candidate's preference for a particular kind of teaching. Ex-Service candidates had also to give particulars of such service, with especial reference to educational work in the Forces. Inquiries were made about hobbies and interests.

From this information, students were selected for interview on two grounds:

1. Those who had passed an examination recognized as qualifying for admission to a normal training college, and
2. Those whose records suggested, in view of their con-

tinued education or work as leaders or instructors in the Forces or in civil life, that they were suitable.

The advisory committee thought that good use could be made of evidence derived from the standard intelligence tests used in the Navy, Army, and Air Force, and recommended that, if this information could be made available, students who had not worked these tests should be required to work similar ones for the special purposes of this scheme. Also, before candidates reached the interview stage, all those in class 2—much the larger number—were to work a test in the use of the English language, in a piece of connected writing, on a subject selected for them, and related to their own recent experience. These scripts were to be made available to the interviewing panels. This was done. Candidates wrote their scripts when attending for interview, and the panel saw these before the interview. The Service's tests, however, could not be made available.

The most eulogistic supporters of the emergency training scheme will agree that a few students got past the interview and into the colleges who should not have done so (and if they are in any doubt, inquiries among college Principals will inform them). The proportion was not large—some Principals have estimated it as between 4 and 5 per cent—and it may be that the proportion of highly suitable people whom the panels rejected was even smaller. But there were such cases; some Principals—and the local authorities who dealt with such rejected candidates and arranged for their re-examination—had direct evidence of this.

Since, however, both these phenomena did occur, and since between the extremes there was in the colleges a dull streak of mediocrity, it is worth while to look briefly at the interviewing methods used, and to contrast them with those employed to choose the students for the trial emergency training class at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, which was held at the request of the Ministry of Education before the emergency colleges proper opened, and which will be described in some detail later. In selecting the candidates for this 'trial run', there was a 'lengthy personal interview by both the Warden and the Vice-Principal'. This contrasts oddly with the fact that in the

emergency colleges Principals had no say whatever in selection of their candidates. They were simply sent their 'quota'. This was, however, inevitable in the early days, since large numbers of candidates were accepted *before* many of the Principals were appointed: which again was unavoidable in an improvised scheme of such dimensions. Candidates were, on the other hand, allowed to select their colleges in some cases.

The advisory committee had recommended that each interviewing panel should consist of four people: an officer of the Ministry of Education, a teacher, a person of experience in the local administration of education, and someone experienced in the work of teacher training. If the idea of having available for these panels the information gained from Service tests, etc., had proved practicable, and if such and other data had been before them, then, if the panels were really well chosen (after all, an officer of the Ministry of Education, for instance, could mean a number of things), and were of the full number advised, they would have been thoroughly equipped for their work.

But selection is always a heavy responsibility, as was brought home by Lord Moran when recently he suggested that 'we are only at the very beginning of a method of assessing accurately the suitability of men and women . . . for . . . any . . . sphere.' (*Nature*, 24 July 1948, in a report of a discussion on the interview and the written examination.) While some of these panels were magnificent, there is evidence that they were not invariably so. Thus the question inevitably arises: good in the main though the emergency students were, and a strong blood transfusion to teaching, is it not possible that by still more scrupulous selection they might have been even better? It is, admittedly, generally agreed by all concerned that the panels did, on the whole, an excellent job, and they undoubtedly rejected a large number of applicants who were not at all bad people but who did not seem to measure up to the high standard they set. But here and there a panel tended to go for the old 'type', when they offered themselves, rather than 'characters'. It was interesting to find that, very frequently, the most outstanding of these panels, composed of people of the highest qualifications and suitability, were those in the provinces.

The much-criticized 'country-house party' test used by the

Civil Service Selection Board might have real possibilities as one part of a comprehensive selection scheme for teachers. Headmasters and headmistresses have often been heard to say that to watch the children's faces at their first introduction to a student teacher is to know straight away whether that student has at least *one* part of the essential personal equipment. Selection Boards interview and ponder and judge. Children just take a look. They know. A 'country-house week-end party' which included children of all ages should provide valuable evidence.

Having been selected for training, there was, for too many candidates, a long, wearisome wait for entrance to a college. This was unavoidable because of the unexpectedly early ending of the Japanese war, the great difficulty in finding suitable premises, and the lengthy delays in adapting them when they *were* tracked down. (Plumbing, in particular, was often a nightmare. One college was held up for four months over this.) But the Ministry could surely have improved on the designation 'emergency waiters' for these unfortunates. There is more in a name than either Shakespeare or Government departments allow.

The Ministry did what it could to help the students during this period, by putting them in touch with their L.E.A.s, and asking the latter to be ready with help and advice, with reference both to already existing part-time classes or courses in the neighbourhood, and to the possibility (when there were enough students) of arranging for them special courses, week-end schools, etc. Guidance was asked, too, from the L.E.A.s, for these waiting candidates' private reading; and visits to schools of various types were among the Ministry's other suggestions. L.E.A.s received the comforting assurance, *à propos* the last suggestion, that the visits were not likely to be 'embarrassingly frequent', since not many candidates would be free during school hours! (Appendix 2, Circular 106.)

Many students, during this waiting period, worked as temporary teachers in schools. Opinion has always been divided as to the wisdom of this. On the one hand, there is much truth in the old adage 'a little knowledge . . .', and it is obvious that such work can be a great strain on untrained people. On the



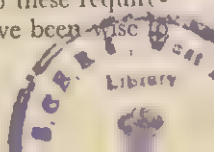
other hand, this is precisely how large numbers of teachers—and among them some of the best—have, in the past, found their feet in the profession. It is probably true to say that most of the teachers now serving in the public schools have never been 'trained'. And there is the undoubted fact that, had these students not been given jobs in the schools many of them would, having gravitated to other work, have been lost to teaching.

It must, of course, depend very largely on the head and staff with whom the 'emergency waiter' works. If the student teacher is really initiated into the first steps of his craft, and if he does not consequently think he knows all about it, the experience will surely be all to the good. But it is difficult, where staff is short and classes are large, to think only of the student's good, and if he is used as a source of cheap labour or is unskilfully guided, or worst of all (as not infrequently happened) put with the backward class which no one else wants, then indeed he would be better off at almost any other temporary job.

In Circular 1652, the Board of Education's advisory committee gave detailed suggestions for the selection of teaching staff for emergency training colleges. In each college there were to be some members of staff dealing mainly with the so-called professional subjects, and others with general school subjects of all kinds. The two groups were to share the supervision of the students' teaching practice in the schools. Men and women of high calibre were sought for this work, people who 'combined academic distinction with freshness and adaptability of mind, and . . . a live interest in general education questions . . .'. It might have been added that they should also have proved themselves as *lecturers*—so different an art from teaching—and, even more important, as initiators or leaders of discussion. As it turned out, this was yet another of those early 'guesses' which came off. In its search for such tutors, the Board cast longing eyes on the Secondary School staffs, and indeed over the whole field—primary and post-primary alike. A 'leaven' of lecturers from existing training colleges was to complete the team.

The general reader, while assenting in full to these requirements, may possibly wonder if it might not have been wise to

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include also people who, while combining distinction in their own subject with the gift of communication (and, after all, what else are teaching and lecturing?) were otherwise not previously connected with the teaching world. There were, indeed, such experiments made. Their success or failure was largely dependent on the constitution of the rest of the staff. If these could supply what the students needed of actual information about conditions in the schools, then what matter that, for example, a brilliant sculptor, endowed with the gift also of communicating his art, could tell his students nothing of the school world?

But the bulk of the staffs were, in fact, drawn from the sources indicated by the Board, who hoped that this blending of teachers from primary, senior and secondary schools, and of training college lecturers, 'may have healthy repercussions on the educational system as a whole'.<sup>1</sup> Quite. But the immediate question was its success or failure in the emergency training colleges themselves. Were these distinguished practitioners in fact recruited? And if so, how did the blending work out in practice?

The answer to one of these questions emerged with complete clarity: the success of the practising teacher as a tutor, in all the branches, was unquestioned. Overwhelming evidence from all over the country, as a result of inquiries from Principals, Ministry officials and students, confirm his and her outstanding success as tutor in the emergency training colleges. This step was one of the leaps into the unknown referred to in Chapter 1, and it carried with it a grave risk. But it succeeded brilliantly: controversial as are many of the successes claimed by emergency training, the inquirer up and down the country will hear only one view on this one.

The advisory committee had suggested that the staffs should be selected from the whole country, but that the team for any particular college should, as far as possible, be chosen from an area compact enough to allow the members to meet before the college opened, to plan their work. This happened in the case

<sup>1</sup> Later the blend was often enriched by the inclusion of ex-Service members of staff from the education, intelligence, special services, and other branches of the Forces.

of the colleges first opened, and later when the opening of a college was delayed. Otherwise, in many cases it proved a counsel of perfection. The Board selected 'shadow' staffs in the early stages, but when the training scheme was well under way posts were advertised and appointments made in the normal way.

The committee suggested also that the 'fullest possible use' should be made of part-time and visiting staff. These, it indicated, need not necessarily all be professional teachers, and their engagements at the colleges could vary between a single lecture, a series of lectures and a period of several weeks at a time in a college. Many colleges, taking advantage of this elasticity, were able to secure the services of distinguished lecturers from universities for single lectures and sometimes for several. These visitors were, more often than not, available after their lectures for discussion with the students. This led in many places to a great widening of horizons in students, as well as an enrichment of college life. Many of these distinguished visitors commented on the high level of discussion of the emergency students and on their refusal to be spoon-fed.

## Chapter 4

### STUDIES AND ACTIVITIES

THE Board of Education, though it gave (through its advisory committee) broad general indications as to the lay-out and content of the course of study to be followed in the emergency training colleges, yet allowed the individual college Principals and staffs complete freedom in their adaptation and interpretation of these proposals to their own particular syllabus. Principals have invariably been warm in their acknowledgement and appreciation of this freedom.

Very broadly, the principle underlying this new form of training was a combination of academic study with much more practical work, and far more actual practice in schools, than had been customary in the normal teachers' training colleges. This school practice was largely instrumental in overcoming what was, on the face of it, a very natural hostility to the scheme on the part of the teachers in the schools.

Because of the brevity of the training, and of the lower academic qualifications required for acceptance of 'emergency' students, teachers feared a lowering of their professional standards and prestige. Many of them, however, would to-day testify to their own astonished delight at the quality and keenness of these new recruits. They realized, when given the opportunity to judge at first hand, that the emergency training scheme, though intensive, was indeed the flexible and comprehensive thing it was claimed to be, and that these students, with their extremely 'mixed-bag' of experience and knowledge gleaned from outside the teaching world, could really absorb and use this intricate and exacting course in a way that would leave the eighteen-year-old student gasping.

Moreover, it gradually became apparent that, even in actual *length* of training, the course was not, when the longer hours and shorter vacations were taken into account, and when,

later, an extra month was added to it, so very much shorter than the normal. Here and there, indeed, among the colleges, a somewhat wild claim was occasionally made that even more was achieved in the time than in the normal two-year course of training. Save in cases of exceptional students (who would almost certainly have distinguished themselves anyhow and anywhere) careful inquiries have failed to substantiate this claim; and among the most modest disclaimants have been those Principals who, while holding records of fine work in permanent teachers' training colleges, have also done most outstanding pioneer work in the emergency ones. This is the sort of uncritical praise (from which the emergency training colleges appear to have suffered in an almost equal proportion to the uninformed destructive criticism also directed against them) which one deprecates; damaging, as it does, rather than benefiting its subject; and the general reader would be well advised not to take it seriously. One Principal, indeed, when asked for an opinion on it, went so far as to describe the claim as 'rubbish'. In any case, such comparison is unrealistic, because the ages and backgrounds of the emergency students made the approach to their training, the content of their courses and the methods of learning and teaching different in innumerable ways—both obvious and subtle—from those used with eighteen to twenty year olds.

The advisory committee laid down (Circular 1652) that in addition to doing a great deal of practice teaching in schools, the emergency students were to study the general principles of education and teaching method, the philosophy of education, psychology and health education. Skillfully devised courses could, the committee felt, obviate any danger of such a far-reaching curriculum imposing too heavy a strain on the students. (Maturity, of course, steps in again, in this connection, as a saving factor.) Full opportunities of studying and practising educational methods and techniques were equated in importance (by the committee) with reading and thinking about education in its wider sense, with '... having regard to its individual, social and ethical implications, and to its setting in the general pattern of life: all this ... illumined by ... historical development of educational ideas.'

Every student was also to follow a course in the usage of the English language, combined with a directed course in general reading. In addition, each student was to study some general subjects—a variable number—chosen from the following list: English literature<sup>e</sup> (or Welsh language and literature), history, religious knowledge, geography, modern languages, mathematics, general science, physics, chemistry, biology, rural science, gardening, music, art, craft, and physical education. The general subjects chosen for each individual student were to be decided by discussion between him or her and the staff. The selection was to be neither narrowly specialized nor wide-flung enough to be too heavy a load, and a balance was to be nicely calculated between the special study, the general reading and the professional course.

The principles governing the planning and carrying out of the courses on general subjects were that the course must be related: (1) to the student's previous knowledge; (2) to his future work as a teacher (thus, it was advised that tutors in the general subjects should also be the ones to instruct in the special methods of teaching those subjects); to include some literary, practical and historical aspects of the chosen subjects, and to enable students, while gaining 'some degree of mastery' over a limited field, to learn also how they could, later, gradually and steadily expand this field for themselves. This, if skilfully carried out, would clearly obviate the danger of superficiality of treatment inherent in so short a course. The inter-relations between subjects were to be clearly indicated to the student, as well as the relation between each subject and the general scheme of human affairs. It was stressed by the committee that great elasticity (presumably both in content and method) would need to be allowed for in the planning of these courses, on account of the diverse abilities and attainments expected among the students.

The committee suggested the following schedule as a guide for the planning of the year's training. Their expressed wish was that this should be neither too rigidly imposed, nor substantially departed from.



	<i>weeks</i>
Preparatory Stage (including school visits)	6
Main Course. Part I	4
Teaching Practice	3
Vacation	1
Main Course. Part II	12
Vacation	2
Teaching Practice	9
Vacation	1
Main Course. Part III	14
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The preparatory stage was intended to initiate the students gently into what was, for most, a quite new kind of life from the one they had left. At the same time it aimed to handle sympathetically the anxiety they would almost certainly have to make an immediate acquaintance with their new calling. The wisdom and foresight of this latter can be measured by the fact that over-seriousness and anxiety on the part of some students was always a very real factor in the emergency training colleges.

At this stage there was to be plenty of scope for informal talks and discussions on widely varying subjects, which 'should be presented provocatively as a challenge'. The committee also advised that pictures, films, books, etc., should be readily available. Students, while they were to spend some time in the schools at this stage, were to do so as observers only. Good schools were to be used for the purpose, the aim being to 'spend enough continuous time in a school, and receive enough help . . . to have the working of a good school clearly impressed on their minds without the distraction of preparing to give lessons themselves'.

Actually, Principals used this preparatory stage in various ways. Some began with a series of lectures followed by visits to schools. Some put the visits first and then sat down to discuss them with the students. Others gave students what could be called 'limbering-up' exercises, that is, work such as a social survey, not directly connected with teaching at all, but de-

signed to start minds unused to study 'ticking over' again, and to develop a sense of community in the college.

The main course was designed to give the students good long reaches of time for the continuous study they would now be ready for. It was to include private (though to some extent supervised) reading. Discussions were to bulk relatively larger than lectures, and the tutorial system was to be used as far as possible. (Thus, more than ever, success or failure would devolve on the staff.)

Close co-operation was asked for between the staffs in colleges and in schools, co-ordination between the two to be in the hands of the college Principal. As in the preparatory stage, only the best schools were to be used, where students would contact a '... vigorous many-sided school life and ... receive supervision from teachers of outstanding professional competence'. To achieve this, the Board were ready to make arrangements for school practice over a very wide area, and to have students, if necessary, living away from college for a time. *Advantage*, even, was wrested from this necessity and the opportunity seized to relate it to students' future work. Thus, intending rural teachers could go and live in a village, becoming *au fait* with all that a (good) village school signifies in the community it serves. Bearing in mind the threat under which the small village school at present exists, the importance of this suggestion is not easily exaggerated. If a considerable number of the best emergency students, as a result of this opportunity given in training, elect out of a love of country life and people to work in the smaller village schools, instead of remaining in the big towns and insisting that the children be uprooted and brought to *them*, and moreover, if they help to bring the school back to its former status in the village, they will have made no mean contribution towards resolving the present paradoxical state of affairs where, at one and the same time, people are being implored to remain in or go back to rural life and the schools where their children might be educated are being closed.

Moreover, the advisory committee did not intend these prolonged absences from college to lead to a divorce between college and school, but rather the reverse. (Circular 1652, p. 5.) The

ideas and theory discussed and thought out during the college training would be available for correlation with the experience gained in the schools. Great care was to be taken that only a small number of students went to any one school at the same time, so that they saw the school working in normal conditions. Unfortunately, in many cases, this proved impossible to achieve. Two main difficulties throughout emergency training proved to be to find enough schools within a reasonable distance, and to avoid having large numbers of students at a time in a school.

Provision was made for the withdrawal of students during the course, on two grounds: (1) if they themselves wished it; and (2) if the college staff considered them unsuitable. There is evidence that, in actual practice, it was not always easy for a Principal to secure the withdrawal of a student (which brings us back to the point that, surely, the Principals themselves should—ideally—both select their students and have the deciding voice in their withdrawal). In the colleges there was a minority who had somehow satisfied the interviewing panels, but who, for varying reasons, proved during training that they were quite unsuitable for teaching. There was even some degree of neurosis: the ex-prisoner-of-war, for example, who had perhaps hoped to find a focus and a release in teaching, but who had not the necessary emotional stability. Though the percentage of these misfits appears to have been very small (some Principals put it at less than 5 per cent), it was potentially quite influential in the colleges and will be still more so in the schools.

It will be seen from the curriculum that the emergency training course made great demands on the students' powers of endurance, both mental and physical. The days were much longer than in the normal training colleges and the work harder. A high standard of physical and mental fitness was necessary. The course was hard, not only because of the amount of work which had to be got into it, but also because the students *made* it hard by giving themselves so unreservedly to it. Principals agree that emergency students did far more, in any given period of time, than do the eighteen to twenty-year olds. And both women and men worked equally hard. Gone, in the emergency

training colleges, was any ground for the old truism that women at college work harder than men. Naturally—these men were of an age when life is to be taken seriously; many of them were married and with children of their own. Their time for dalliance—if they ever had it—was over.

This feeling among emergency college Principals that the emergency student left the eighteen year old far behind is very strong. More than one Principal who has had experience of both types of college for women has consequently expressed the wish that there were some form of national service for women, which they must do before entering college and which would give these girls something of the stability, independence and sense of responsibility of their emergency trained sisters.

This is not the place to discuss conscription for women. But some experience of this kind, between school and college, would have the two-fold advantage of giving girls more time to make their choice of career, and a chance of bringing to their training some knowledge of life outside the schoolroom.

In addition to their comprehensive programme of studies, the emergency training colleges were remarkable for a wide diversity, on a very high level, of other activities. These, however, were never 'extra' in the sense of being extraneous to the college work. Rather, they were spontaneous expressions of the great vitality in these colleges, which found vent in this constant evolving of new attacks on that work.

In some colleges drama was the outstanding activity of this kind. Among others were art, music, literary surveys, 'projects' (on the school project lines) and local surveys. Most colleges developed several such activities, but if there was one among them which the emergency training colleges, as a whole, seized above others and made peculiarly their own, it was drama. They made it their own because, recognizing the great educative possibilities in it, they harnessed it to their English courses and began to develop these possibilities. They found that if drama were taken seriously, as part of the college work, and not (as so frequently in other places, as a performance which must please some external and unknown audience) the possibilities were almost unlimited. For example, it was found to be a great developer of that self-discipline so essential to a

teacher—for how can he reveal this quality to children, except indirectly and gradually, through his own practice of it? Should an actor succumb to a sudden attack of stage 'nerves', he will ruin the efforts of the others. A moment's hesitation on his part, and the play will be thrown out of gear. Therefore he cannot allow the attack to develop.

A successful teacher must also be able to share, imaginatively, the lives of the children whom he teaches. Note the comment so frequently made of the successful nursery and infant school teacher: 'Isn't she a kid?' She is, of course, very much more besides, but her possession of that secret spring which, at a touch, gives her the freedom of those babies' minds is an essential part of her equipment to deal with them.

A Principal has said that 'once you have an atmosphere in college which develops the personality, then the teaching will be effective'. Such development of personality and character has been found to be one of the direct results of dramatic work in these colleges. The interpretation of a character very different from one's own—if it is to be successful—needs what one Principal has called an 'enlargement' of the personality. 'To know all . . .', and here is one way, at any rate, of increasing understanding of one's fellow-men, by an extension of one's own personality. A successful actor *must* forget himself, and enter, imaginatively, into another. This self-forgetting, the emergency colleges found, when it is fully achieved brings in its train, too, that confidence so necessary for complete development. Another great advantage in college dramatic work was that the students were learning, all the time, how to produce classroom drama, with the minimum of stage properties and other helps. In some colleges, direct research was made into the possibilities of new and better ways of handling drama in schools.

The forms which this dramatic work took seemed endless in their variety. They varied from the straightforward production of a single play, to a whole series of plays, forming a drama festival. Camden Training College (London) put on several such festivals. One ranged from Aristophanes to Shaw, and one, held in celebration of Shakespeare's birthday, demonstrated some of the possibilities of presenting Shakespeare in the classroom. The former included extracts from Aristophanes's

*The Frogs*, Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and *Henry IV*. Other playwrights represented included Karel Čapek, Eugene O'Neill, John Drinkwater, J. B. Priestley and Maurice Baring. The visiting dramatic critic was handed a sheaf of notes on the plays, written by the students, which in places amounted to good, constructive criticism, and which never failed to challenge and interest.

At another college, Oakley College (Glos.), drama was used as an 'essential part of the course in English language and literature'. Many plays were produced during the year. The students formed into groups of about six or seven and appointed a 'producer-leader', and each group produced a one-act play. From among the groups there evolved gradually the nucleus of a larger one, ready to undertake a play of normal length. But always these productions were related to the student's needs, in his English course and in his general development.

Again, in some colleges, the students wrote and produced plays of their own, as part of their English course. At Wandsworth Training College (London), for instance, a group of students, at the suggestion of their tutor, worked on the idea of bringing Dr. Johnson back to life in this century. The result was an intriguing play which must have needed much research. Can it be doubted that such a forthright attack on the study of the good doctor—or of anyone else—must yield results incomparably more valuable than those of the traditional, docile, training college note-taker?

The standard of these productions was usually extremely high, from voice production and control—in itself so valuable (and so neglected) a training for a teacher—to the interpreting of subtleties. There was rarely a hint of 'guying' or over-acting; and the quality of stage management achieved—costumes, lighting and scenery—starting as it did, more often than not, from nothing, amazed by its ingenuity and by its revelation of what imagination can do with the very minimum of 'props'.

There was, for example, a production of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* at Newland Park Training College (Bucks.), set against a severely draped backcloth, in a room so small as to give the intimate effect of an Elizabethan theatre. It had not, of course, the gloss of a professional performance, but, without any



exaggeration, it did have some qualities missed in the subsequent West-End production of this play. Chief among these were its triumph over the limitations of *Dr. Faustus* as a play of action, and its unquestioning acceptance of it as a bombastic, pitiless, starkly tragic poem. Consequently, the fact that the naked horror of the play takes place in Faustus's mind only was no limitation to these students, and they were able to carry the audience the whole time with their interpretation of what amounts to spiritual drama. This is not to say that the 'apparitions' did not appear in the Newland Park production, but they were managed in the simplest way, and their full significance was conveyed to the audience through the mind of Faustus himself.

There is nothing that the professional stage—with its reliance on luxurious and expensive aids to production—finds so difficult to do.

This same college's more recent production of Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* followed the same tradition, and showed clearly that Newland Park was indeed blessed in its producer of drama. If the visitor should have wondered, for a moment, what relevance this production had to emergency training college work, two things would quickly have informed him. First, an inquiry as to the then current English syllabus and second (but not in order of importance) the obvious response, both from cast and (mainly student) audience, to the poetic surge and sway which runs like a strong current beneath Massinger's language.

Though the Newland Park productions were among the very high lights in emergency training college drama, there was much good dramatic work done throughout the colleges. And though there was, very occasionally, one which did not come up to expectations, even then something was gained by the students involved, as is suggested by the following scrap of conversation overheard during an interval:

HE: 'You can't have Shakespeare's noble lords speaking like —shire rustics.'

SHE: 'Not even if it results in —shire rustics speaking like Shakespeare's noble lords?'

There is the crux of it. First, foremost and all the time, these

college activities were considered in terms of their value to the student himself. The audience was incidental. What mattered was the student's own greater understanding of Shakespeare or Shaw—his response to the philosophy and poetry of great drama; his improved bearing, diction and voice-control, and his personal development. If, during the process of learning these things, some of the cast should set vibrating any too sensitive tympana in the audience, well, it was not of the first importance. This outlook on their dramatic work renders all the more impressive the almost invariable high level reached in emergency college productions.

One of the most controversial parts of the whole emergency scheme was the decision to replace external examinations by a continuous assessment of the students' work. 'What!' said the critics, 'No exams for emergency training colleges? How then measure the students' ability to teach? How do you know you are not releasing into the profession masses of unqualified teachers, much more dangerous (because they would be "hidden" and indeed would bear the insignia of the qualified) than the "straight" uncertificated teacher, who can at any rate be clearly seen?'

This was a very natural reaction. The danger was real. The advisory committee, well aware of it, had a two-fold plan for guarding against it, and it will be best to put this plan, very briefly, before the reader, and ask him to judge whether it provided a satisfactory safeguard.

1. The committee had laid down among their reasons for rejecting a formal external examination, that this would tend to restrict the college staffs' freedom in planning the flexible courses they had advised, that it would add 'undesirable pressure on the already heavily burdened student, and that such an examination would need complicated machinery, unsuitable to a temporary scheme. It recommended therefore that the year's work 'should be assessed on the basis of internal tests for which . . . staff of colleges . . . would be responsible . . . subject to a fully effective external check . . . and the Board of Education must . . . take responsibility for . . . maintenance of a national standard.' Full records were to be kept, the testing of students and recording of the results were to be continuous, and

the results available to the external assessor at all stages. Thus the student would know his year's work to have been fully tested. (Here, again, was the individual approach.) The final assessment took the form of 'Pass', 'Fail' or 'Referred'; and no special marks, such as 'distinction' in particular subjects, were to be used. 'Referred' students were considered to need further training, and their college was to recommend them for an extra term's, or at most two terms', training.

2. The committee also advised that there should be provision for additional study, for one, or at most two, terms, for students who showed themselves capable of studying certain subjects at a more advanced level than would be possible in the college year. These studies would normally be taken at a permanent training institution and the provision would apply in particular to subjects such as physical training and handicraft, in view of the anticipated needs in the schools for specialists in these subjects. At least three colleges of art have been taking students for these extra terms, and at Carnegie College (Leeds) men have been receiving physical training. Here, again, there has been the same rapid development of unsuspected powers in these men and women. At the Canterbury School of Art, for example, they produced amazingly good work in painting, lettering, modelling and sculpture after only a few weeks. True, they had teachers of near genius.

For the first two years of the emergency trained teacher's career he or she was to be on probation, and until this period was satisfactorily concluded, would not receive the full status of a qualified teacher. During this time, he or she must follow a part-time course of study, designed to supplement those parts of his or her particular academic and general educational background which were incomplete. The advisory committee considered this to be most important, in view of the fact that these teachers were to be regarded, eventually, as fully qualified, to be paid at the same rates and eligible for promotion to headships of schools and other responsible positions, and furthermore, to be at no disadvantage with other applicants for such promotion.

It will be clearly seen that these two probationary years are of the utmost importance for the achievement of this end.

The committee suggested that the course of study be settled for each student individually, '... on tutorial advice and formally approved in outline by the Board', with the paramount idea of supplying what students lacked to complete their qualification, and thus 'to enable them to educate their pupils in the broadest and fullest sense of the word'. Existing classes run by universities and other bodies, as well as special ones, were to be used. Throughout the two years the students were to receive special care, help and supervision of their part-time course.

To some extent this advice of the committee's on the probationary period has proved beyond the capacity of many local authorities, though a very great deal has been, and is being, done by and for them at this crucial stage. The Buckinghamshire authority, for instance, holds courses for these teachers at its beautiful centre, Missenden Abbey, and East Sussex at Pulborough; the East Riding of Yorkshire has held, at the request of emergency trained teachers, a course in the history of education, and recurrent 'refresher' courses are held at Exhall Training College and at Bolton. Excellent courses have been provided at Great Yarmouth, and the local education authorities for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton have organized a regional scheme for probationary training.

The emergency trained teacher takes his two years of probation as conscientiously as he took his college training, and there is evidence that many of them are finding the former, on top of their exacting and absorbing new job, a considerable strain. Anxiety on this score was reflected in the Ministry's Circular 201 issued on 12 April 1949. In the earlier Circular 106 (22 May 1946), though there was, even as early as this, a realization that these teachers *might* be over-burdened by their probationary course (paragraph 4, Appendix 3), the emphasis was, on the whole, towards requiring the full implementation of the advisory committee's suggestions. It did, however, continue to aim at the individual treatment of each case, and it advised that '... in many cases it might be wise not to make any formal requirements of the probationer during his first six months of teaching work'. Circular 201 said (paragraph 6): 'In the light of reports received. . . Experience has confirmed the

soundness of [this suggestion].’ Also: ‘Experience suggests that at least during the first year it may be inadvisable for him to undertake attendance at more than one evening class in the week.’

While these recommendations would appear to involve an under-estimate of the capacity and vitality of many emergency trained teachers, they are being welcomed by all concerned for the sake of those—and among them are some of the most promising—who need a period of time to adjust to the new work, with the minimum of other demands on them. The heads of some of the schools in which these teachers are working have shown anxiety on this matter. They feel that there is a very real danger that some of them—and again, it is said, some of the finest—may become discouraged by too heavy a load, made still heavier by the depressing physical conditions they find in many of the schools.

Some emergency trained teachers have themselves suggested that the ideal would have been, after their thirteen-months’ training, to teach for three or six months, and then go back to college for another three, or ideally, six months; one job at a time. This might not have been possible in the early stages of the scheme, but surely now, when colleges are closing—and are soon all to close—and staffs are being released, it should be practicable. These teachers are very conscious indeed of the need to supplement their training, but their very conscientiousness makes it easy to overburden them. Some heads of schools (who have some of the cream of the emergency trained on their staffs) have said in the Press that these men and women are of such a fine calibre and ability that to put them on probation at all savours of impertinence. But Sir Herbert Barker himself, with his proven and most original gift of healing, was not allowed to practise as a medical doctor without full qualification; and it does seem a bounden duty to the schools, as well as only fair to the emergency teacher himself, to see that his brief training is supplemented where necessary. After all, in any case where such supplementing is not necessary this will soon become apparent, and no part-time course devised for him could possibly strain him. He may even, if he so wishes, take a more advanced course: some are even studying in their

spare time for university degrees. The wisdom of this, however, is being very much questioned, in view of the strain it imposes.

It is obvious that such emergency students as, for example, were found on entering their colleges to be so well qualified as regards their general education that they were ready for actual professional training straight away, would not need the work during the two-year probationary period that most emergency trained teachers should do. But these exceptions do not remove the need for the general rule.

## Chapter 5

### EXPERIMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

How did the Board of Education set to work? Wisely deciding on a trial run, it asked Goldsmiths' College (one of the foremost permanent training colleges for teachers) to conduct, during its academic year 1944-5, a one-year course for twenty-eight students already discharged, on medical grounds, from the Forces.

An idea of how carefully these twenty-eight were selected has already been given; of rather more than seventy applicants, over fifty received a 'lengthy personal interview' by the Warden and Vice-Principal. The youngest candidate accepted was 23 and the oldest 37, the median age being 28. (This is, in retrospect, of especial interest, since some emergency training college Principals have found 27 to 28 to be the ideal age for their students.) Seventeen were married and most of these had children. Because of the 'accident of circumstance', there was, unfortunately, only one woman among the twenty-eight.

Apart from the question of age and maturity, the interviews were concerned mainly with the previous education of the candidates, both school and post-school; any work they had done with young people; and their character, personality, interests and attitude towards teaching.

With regard to their educational background, 'barely half' had had a secondary education to School Certificate stage. But it was found that, though so many of these students lacked this conventional academic prelude to teaching, 'their wealth of practical experience, their sense of personal responsibility . . . their interest in social and economic questions, and their capacity to think objectively, make them refreshingly different . . . from the normal products of the average secondary school'. This, from Goldsmiths' College, with its high level of entry and standards, is significant indeed. But that is not all.

In an article in *The Times Educational Supplement* (18 August 1945) Dr. M. M. Lewis, the Vice-Principal, wrote:



'During the course one striking fact emerged. It was impossible to find any clear line of demarcation, either in general academic ability or in the practical work of teaching, between those who had and those who had not attended a secondary grammar school. In adolescence there may have been differences; but ten years later these had been obliterated by common experiences at work and in the Forces, and by the general education open to-day to any intelligent and energetic man or woman.'

How seldom among those 'normal products' who find their way to teachers' training colleges does discussion uncover, by accident, a student's private reading in such subjects as the theory of economics, or his knowledge of ancient Greek! Yet these were only two of many such exciting discoveries made in the 'Goldsmiths' class'.

From the first, the tutors at Goldsmiths' were struck by the difference of approach between these mature students and that of the usual entrants. The twenty-eight were, for instance, interested in the fundamental principles of education, rather than in routine details of school work. They listened attentively, but used their heads rather than note-books. Those in charge of the course were quick to seize their opportunity. The student of the relevant documents cannot but be impressed by the extraordinary fortune of the twenty-eight in their tutors, two of whom, for example, at an early stage, drove home the fact that truth has many facets and that no individual view of it can be other than relative. How valuable this, for men of an age where there is always danger of the set mind replacing the raw exuberance of youth. Clearly the success of this course did not lie solely with the students. These forerunners of a new student 'set up' were indeed blessed in those who guided them.

After an introductory two days in college, the Goldsmiths' group spent a fortnight in the schools, where, under the guidance of Heads, teaching staff and their own tutors, they were to observe, and to absorb what they might, in classroom and common-room. They were free to try their hand at actual teaching or not, as they chose. Some, even on the first day, took a complete lesson, and some contributed here and there from their own experience. Imagine, for instance, how a geography

lesson on the Mediterranean was lit up for the children by a vivid reconstruction of a Malta convoy from a man who had taken part in it.

But these students were worried by their lack of academic knowledge. How could they, they asked, after watching an algebra or trigonometry, a French or German lesson, absorb enough knowledge in a mere year? The tutors were sympathetic, but whether the ghost of anxiety was laid at this stage (if, indeed, it could be) has not been told. It may be that the answer was not found until the two-year probationary period . . . or later.

For the course itself, Goldsmiths' followed very much the ground plan suggested in Circular 1652. That is, each student studied the principles of education, methodology—including a course on the teaching of English and Arithmetic—the use of mechanical aids, health education, and a course in the usage of the English language. In addition, each student took one special and one subsidiary subject. In view of their maturity, it was felt that it would be unwise 'to restrict the range of choice by the application of some predetermined general principle'. Choice was therefore considered individually, and with some scope for adjustment in the early stages.

It was felt by the Goldsmiths' staff that they had great advantages, in their experimental class, over the new and unformed colleges. For example, they had a tradition . . . experience, too, to hand on to newcomers; and they stressed that the new colleges must not neglect these pillars of a sound structure, but must build them into their walls. True; but tradition *can* be a drag on the skirts of progress. A new film will receive any impression the artist designs—if he *be* an artist—unrestricted by old shadows and flaws. He can consciously and deliberately choose his landscape, rejecting and incorporating at will . . . just as a research scientist, having absorbed all he can from what is now known, will shut his laboratory door and work unhampered. Tradition, yes; but constantly re-assessed, held up to the light and examined for signs of wear and tear.

A fascinating point about the emergency training colleges was the speedy evolution and handing on, between one college year and the next, of a spontaneously generated tradition. A

standard was quickly available to aim at, and perhaps surpass. Further, in many colleges, the outgoing generation, even from the very first, showed a real care and concern for the well-being of those who would follow them. This expressed itself in various ways—by hints left for the newcomers, for instance, on easy shopping in the new neighbourhood, and by a general desire to smooth the early and sometimes awkward stages of settling in. In short, the outgoing students clearly wished those who would come after them to benefit from their experience. The 'light fantastic' was by no means absent, either. In one men's college, a 'rag' culminated, annually, in a candlelight procession to ring the college bell.

From the Goldsmiths' course, the forerunner of the emergency training colleges, much valuable information for the new adventure in training was gathered. In particular, the advisory committee's suggestion that the conditions which decided the choice of subjects and length of individual courses should be flexible (Circular 1652) was proved to be, not only desirable, but perfectly practicable. Eighteen of the twenty-eight 'Goldsmiths' class' students completed their courses within three terms, nine stayed on for a fourth term, and one took another three-term session. In the same way, there was elasticity in choice of subject, as to both the number and the method of study.

A two-year Goldsmiths' student (part of whose course ran parallel with this first experimental class in emergency training) has written in enthusiastic terms of the value to both groups of their association in training; so much so that he felt the policy of opening separate emergency colleges to be unwise. 'The experience', he says (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 8 September 1945) 'of these older students brought a maturity . . . which had a steadying and . . . an illuminating effect. The freshness and alert curiosity of the younger student . . . did much to stimulate and challenge the more firmly held opinions of the older . . . and the benefit was mutual.'

In the closing stages of the emergency training scheme this practice was resumed. At Wall Hall (Herts.) and Newland Park (Bucks.), for example, groups of 'emergency' and 'permanent' students were trained side by side. But, as has been indicated earlier, this is a controversial point; and there can

now be no doubt that the specially established emergency training colleges, in which the vast majority of emergency teachers were trained, proved enormously successful. There is, of course, the point that in the 'emergency' student bodies there was always the great diversity of ages and interests which proved so stimulating to the two groups at Goldsmiths'. There seems to be a strong probability that, where two such groups share a college, the younger and 'permanent' trainees stand to gain more than the 'emergency' ones. Inquiries among staff and students of colleges who, at varying times, have had experience of this type of college community, have tended to confirm this. In any case, there is the complication that older students cannot properly be submitted to a college discipline entirely correct for the 18 year old.

Friendly associations developed between Goldsmiths' and the emergency training colleges proper. At a conference in November 1945, held jointly by this college, Exhall (Warw.) and Wall Hall (Herts.), two of the earliest emergency colleges, mutual problems were discussed. Significantly, Dr. Lewis (who was in charge of the Goldsmiths' classes) said at this conference that he thought the name 'emergency' misleading; since, because of their social experience, these teachers would be complementary, rather than supplementary, to the profession.

Most far-sighted people would surely agree with this. To quibble on the technicality—as has been done in defence of the term—that the scheme came into being to meet an emergency—is neither here nor there. The question is, whether these teachers should or should not go through their professional career with the limiting badge 'emergency trained'. At the opening of Wall Hall Training College, in May 1945, Mr. R. A. Butler, then Minister of Education, warned the students that, after training, they were not going into the Garden of Eden, but into a very difficult world. How more than ever necessary, then, that they should not be handicapped in any avoidable way. Nomenclature would not appear to be the Ministry's strongest point. Surely it should not have been an impossible feat of the imagination to evolve a term which would satisfy accuracy and yet give the emergency trained fair play.

While the broad outlines suggested by the advisory committee for the training of emergency students were followed throughout, adaptations and innovations abounded in the individual colleges. Indeed, if they were notable for one particular quality above others, it was for the degree of originality in them. Experiments of all kinds flourished. No longer was there the hampering and narrowing effect of an examination externally imposed, nor the dead weight of inherited tradition: 'We always did it this way' . . . 'It can't be done that way'. The job was 'gloriously experimental'. Adventure was in the air, and college staffs attacked their massive problem—the working out of an intensive course which would be both short and adapted to each individual student—in a spirit of adventure.

Much of the brilliant and original work done had its inspiration in the more progressive elements of the best permanent training colleges. Naturally, many of the staff had come from these. And at last, in the emergency colleges, they had full freedom to experiment and adapt unhampered by set syllabus and external examinations. These experiments were enriched by the ideas brought by the tutors straight from school and those who came from the Forces. Again, naturally, for these men and women were representative, on the one hand, of the best elements in the work of good progressive schools, and on the other of the pioneer work done during the war in the Services. The result was that the work moved forward on its own momentum; sometimes, it seemed, at the speed of light, sometimes haltingly, but always forward.

The experiments took many forms. They were in educational method, in organization of the work, in the content of the courses, and in the approach to them. Some particularly interesting work on the last was done at a great many of the colleges, in connection with poetry appreciation and the creative approach to it in schools, and indeed, to literature in general. Lectures were reduced to a minimum, and in some colleges almost abandoned in favour of seminars, 'tutorials', and discussions. 'Projects', on school project lines, were carried out, and local surveys of the social survey type. There were even experiments in the art of living together as a college community.

The early difficulties of many of the colleges were gigantic. The domestic problems, alone, which ravaged the start of some—and not only the earliest—would have daunted any but true pioneers. Some colleges had to be put in order, and the household chores done by the staff, even the students' beds made for their arrival. Some of the staffs of various colleges have described the feverish rush to get all this and much else done in time for the influx of students. But there were compensations. 'It is impossible to remain strangers while washing-up together.' These staffs had, in common with others, turned their backs, in leaving their previous work, on a life which they loved and which had a tradition, for a new and undeveloped field, 'with no traditions and an unpredictable future', as one of them put it, and which 'seemed to be threatened by the twin dangers of superficiality and "cramming" '.

And all the time, while trying with one hand to smooth out the intractable domestic scene, they were struggling, with the other, to wring from the authorities the essential tools for their job, above all, books. Books were in short supply everywhere, and it was surely an error of judgment that colleges were not, for a time at least, allowed to purchase them except through H.M. Stationery Office. This involved maddening delays, and frustrations, especially when the staff caught glimpses of books in shops, for want of which their work was held up.

But eventually things eased. The domestic background ceased to heave—indeed, the visitor would now be proudly shown the kitchens and told of the excellent domestic staff—the embryonic libraries developed—more than one college library is really impressive—and the groups of gifted men and women, who formed the staffs, were free to devote their thought and energies towards their primary job.

As well as the danger of 'cramming', they saw before them exhilarating possibilities of new and progressive work. A staff made the exciting discovery that all their previous work (with children) 'had been based on the implicit assumption that the aim of education was the harmonious development of individuals through directed experience'. Moreover, they saw in this—formerly unconscious and now realized—fact, that the great task now confronting them was to apply this principle in



the training of future teachers. It was, indeed, clear to them from the beginning that experimentation was their *only* chance of success. They knew well that a two-year training (in itself considered to be all too short) could not be lifted neatly and replanted in half the space. When drawing up their syllabus, they found that the very absence of tradition and of set examinations gave the environment for such experimental work.

Nor was this new approach exclusive to the colleges. The schools in which the students practised also found it necessary to experiment, because of the flexibility needed to fit the students into their time-tables. In commenting on this necessity, the Head of one of these schools has suggested that it will 'lead to an approach to learning centred on the child rather than on . . . instruction . . . in fact, a child-centred curriculum'. If emergency training has helped towards the realization of this ideal, it has, by virtue of such help, established its claim to the interest of all thoughtful people, and above all, of every parent.

The following brief descriptions of original work done in three of the colleges will illustrate the spirit of adventure in which the colleges, as a whole, attacked their work. It is not suggested, of course, that these experiments were the only, or even the most arresting, of those made in the emergency training scheme. So much original work abounded in the colleges that it is only possible here to sketch in a cross-section of it. Neither is it suggested by anyone concerned that any college's particular achievement was sheer creation and had no roots, no inspiration, no background in the work of older pioneers. Any designer—whether architect, painter, embroiderer or what ever—knows that, however original the inspiration, it has to be worked out on the fabric of established knowledge. But these achievements *were* original in that they added a new growing point (which it is to be hoped will be carefully recorded) to the known theory of education.

The following account, for instance, of an experiment at Borthwick Training College (London), while it clearly shows affinities with various educational techniques (e.g., with the survey, local and otherwise, and with the 'project' method in schools) will yet reveal essential differences from these. The chief of these differences appears to be in the way it was pre-



sented to the student. It was never imposed on her by the staff, from without: the impetus had always to come from the student herself. In the words of a tutor it was 'intrinsically determined and not extrinsically envisaged'.

'Optional II' was the name given by Borthwick Training College to its experiment of substituting for the second optional subject (e.g., history, geography, mathematics) to be chosen by the student as part of her curriculum, an independent investigation of a topic—any topic—chosen by the student herself, purely for reasons of interest and so absorbing to her that she wished to follow it throughout the year. The five hours a week which were allowed on the time-table for the second optional subject were placed entirely at the student's disposal for this private investigation of her own. Tutors were available as and when she needed their help, and there was a flexible arrangement whereby, as her study branched into specialist areas, the appropriate tutor would be on hand to help her. Study periods were 'blocked' (i.e. two or more at a time were available) so that students could have the time and freedom to visit art galleries, museums, libraries and so on, when they needed to. The subjects of the first 'Optional II' studies ranged from 'Chinese Jade' and 'Music for Children through the Ages' to the 'History of Kent'.

As the students settled down to their explorations some interesting facts emerged. Frequently a supposedly strong interest did not bear the hard light of close acquaintance, was found to be superficial only, and 'dried up'. Yet when the attack was made more fundamentally or at a different point '... deep springs of interest . . . unknown to exist before' and certainly unsuspected by the student herself, appeared. The 'self-knowledge' regarded by Tennyson as one of the three conditions which alone 'lead life to sovereign power' would appear to be a by-product of this experiment, which, beginning with initiative, led to a voluntary discipline.

In the considerable success of the experiment, maturity was probably a strongly deciding factor. The sheer sustained effort, consistent over a long period, which the method demanded, would sooner or later find weak spots in the immature. They would be far more likely to lose heart and interest when wrong

turnings were found to have been taken and blind alleys adventured into. Many students did lose their way at first, finding themselves in a maze whose only exit was conditional on acceptance of conclusions which conflicted with their own pre-conceived ideas and prejudices. But this was all to the good provided they had the necessary maturity to make the reorientation. Another reason for success which must not be overlooked was that in 'Optional II' the students, being individual investigators engaged upon projects whose range and depth they could determine, had time to *think*, and indeed were compelled to do so. They were under no necessity to 'survive by hurrying' as the McNair Report said many students had to.

A critical stage in the experiment was reached when the students began their first teaching practice in schools. 'Optional II', they felt, would not avail them now, and anyhow there was no time for such luxuries. Facts, facts, facts, especially 'something we can take into the schools', was what they wanted. The college staff, ever watchful, knew that at this stage anxiety could, yet must not, develop. It saw, too, an opportunity. These students had reached a point at which the link between their individual studies and those of the other students could be demonstrated to them, and also, through this the underlying unity of all knowledge.

A diagram was evolved by the Art lecturer in which the areas of knowledge upon which the students' 'Optional II' studies converged were expressed by an ingenious use of line and colour. As the studies changed in direction or dimension, the lines on the chart indicated this. Thus at a glance the student could glimpse the fundamental unity of knowledge and the point at which her particular study touched it. While preserving the individuality of the latter it gave her perspective and the secure knowledge that her work was part of a whole.

This was in the early stages. As time went by the students gained confidence in this new approach to learning. A new and more vigorous 'attack' was heard in their comments on 'Optional II'. The old diffidence was fading before confidence and now again to quote the tutor: 'The student is at the wheel. She has charted the course.'

Other changes, too, were noticed. A more forceful attitude

to subjects studied in the orthodox way, for example. Students became more constructive, more critical, and their approach to museums, art galleries and experts, was more independent, that of investigators rather than disciples. In short, 'Optional II' was making for a new independence. Moreover, the tutors felt that the spirit generated by the experiment was gradually being extended to the whole college work. Students now talked about an 'Optional II approach', meaning something very positive and knowing just what they meant. Yet at first the idea was 'something of an ogre' to them.

An analysis of the results of the first year's 'Optional II' studies showed that, of 134 studies, about three out of five were either good, quite good or of a very high quality; the other two-fifths mediocre to poor. This result the college felt to be, on the whole, encouraging. The students' own comments, too, were appreciative of the opportunity it gave to work in their own way and at their own pace. Many of them felt that the experience had shown them a way to battle creatively with the two-year probationary period and other future studies. They had been led, through 'Optional II', to view life whole.

There were, naturally, some failures, but, as the analysis shows, they were not a high proportion. It was bound to be, to some degree, a hit or miss business in the first instance. If some method could be evolved by which the students' stage of development could be measured, so that only those with the requisite maturity and thus with the positive characteristics necessary, would take 'Optional II', the method should surely have great possibilities. For the student would then be in possession of that 'wholeness' of outlook which the college considers must be there before she can apprehend the method. Less mature people should follow more orthodox methods.

This is not so far from the realm of probability as might seem; for this same college was, from its inception, concerned also with another experiment; that of the art of living together as a group and of finding in the college community the satisfaction to be found in family relationships. In place of the old system of a hierarchy imposing its authority from above, the definite attempt was made to substitute something of the qualities of family relationships between Principal, staff and stu-

dents in college life and work. (A full account of this experiment will be found in *The New Era*, March 1949.)

Interesting as this attempt was, the frequent visitor to emergency training colleges can have no doubt that such a revolution in college relationships was, in fact, going on in most of the colleges, and was probably at the root of much of their success. It was usually far from conscious or deliberate, but simply a spontaneous result of the freedom in which the colleges worked, of the magnificent staffs and of the great variety and 'interchangeability' of age. Many students were older, and had a wider experience of life, than their tutors. Indeed, when watching emergency students and their tutors together, it was often extremely difficult to tell which was which—and it was never safe to guess. In a community of such diversity of age, and bound together by the common aim of learning and teaching a job rather than passing or preparing students for an examination, there was far more likely to be an air of reality about personal relationships than in the arid segregation of an age-group.

Some colleges carried out, as part of their course, a 'project' on the lines of a school project. In this, instead of studying subjects, a group investigation of every aspect of a chosen topic is made. The method is similar to that of the Borthwick College 'Optional II', except that instead of consisting of a number of individual ventures, the work on a single topic is shared out, and consequently more ground can be covered. Favourite projects in schools are 'Housing', 'Transport', 'Food'. In the course of these experiments much hard thinking was done, by both staffs and students, on the whole question of the project method in schools, its desirability or otherwise for varying types of children, and whether or not it may lead, ultimately, 'back to the textbook it sets out to avoid. There is thought to be a real danger of this last since firms and local bodies—at first so willing to help with facilities to the schools for their projects—may, very naturally, ultimately weary, or lack time, for such help and hand out in place of it diagrams or notes. Thus the schools would be back at their starting point.

But there is much to be said for the school project, and the Principal and staff of Bletchley Park Training College decided

that to carry one out, during their college year, would be both stimulating to the students during their training and productive to them as teachers. There passes very near the college grounds a broad sweep of the Grand Union Canal, and this inspired the subject. Bletchley Park would build a scale model of a section of the canal.

It was hardly likely that this women's college—the youngest and last of the emergency training colleges, and, though it trained for infant and junior schools only, in possession of an excellent science laboratory—would be daunted by the mathematics, scale-drawing, engineering, building and plumbing which the work would demand.

In the outcome, four models were built, one large and three small; and all to scale. The large one, built by the college 'Tank Corps', filled an emergency water tank having a diameter of 36 feet. Nor were there wanting the collectors of canal flora and fauna, or the researchers into canal-boat life. Every detail, even of cabin furnishings, was correct and to scale. Much valuable information was collected about the schooling of canal-boat children and the history of the 'water gipsies'.

Not least, in view of the subsequent threat to our last surviving true folk art—that of the Docks and Inland Waterways Executive to the traditional paintings on canal boats—they served art. As the reader will know, the Executive's intention was to supplant, in the boats which came under their control, those exhilarating and highly individualistic paintings of castle and roses made—and beloved—by the canal-boat people, by a dull and uniform blue and yellow scheme, with plain lettering. Happily, an indignant public opinion forcefully expressed appears to have caused a re-consideration of this intention.

It is, then, of special interest that the Bletchley Park artists did such a magnificent job with the paintings on their model canal boats. Those who took part in this project must have learned much useful and live knowledge in such branches of science as sociology, botany and zoology as well as in social history, art, and design. An insight must have been gained, too, into the school 'project' method, which could hardly have been gained less directly. And, withal, a mere half-day a week

from college time was spent on it. Hours and hours of 'spare' time were, of course, devoted to it.

A further example of an outstanding college project was that of Camden College, on The Cinema, in which the terms of reference were extremely comprehensive. The Camden students, as a result of their inquiry, suggested the setting up of 'viewing committees' to approve or reject films for exhibition expressly for children.

Another idea carried out by many of the colleges was a college exhibition. The frequently high quality of these was the more remarkable when one remembers that in the best of the exhibitions the work in them was done as part of the college course. There was no time for special exhibits to be made. A fine example of a college exhibition at its best was the one which Leavesden Green Training College (Herts.) arranged as part of its festival week in September 1947. This festival—in itself an innovation in training colleges—included two excellent dramatic productions: Auden and Isherwood's *The Ascent of F.6*, and Shaw's *Candida*, and there was a 'Pageant of Hertfordshire Folk' which had a most original twist in the presentation of its traditional scenes, and which must have meant intensive delvings into local history.

This pageant was, in fact, an example of a combined 'project'; about 150 students took part in it. The miming of the building of St. Alban's Abbey (of which students from the physical education department were both authors and performers) showed physical education in its true perspective, as a means towards developing the whole person. Such work should help towards the early demise of the bad old conception of 'P.T.', and its replacement by the ideal of a physical education which develops body, mind and spirit. There were also, among other things, music recitals and concerts, physical training and dance displays, and a play and songs in French.

But the *pièce de resistance* (in at least one visitor's memory) was the exhibition, arranged in departments, of the year's work. It occupied many rooms and dealt with the whole college work. There was nothing scrappy about this exhibition. An idea, once seized on, was followed through. In the English department, for instance (which alone needed three quite large rooms



to house it) the starting point—a study of phonetics—was followed by an illustrated study of the evolution of language. From this, the observer was led, by carefully graded stages, towards the development of literature, and eventually to its ‘flowering’ in a group of poems, exquisitely printed by hand, chosen from the works both of traditional poets and the moderns for their contribution towards a common underlying theme. In the English department, also, there were some fascinating ‘imaginative compositions’. These took a subject of absorbing interest to children—an imaginary island, for instance, or an actual one—and built it in miniature. There was such a reconstruction of ‘Treasure Island’, made accurately to scale, which could hardly fail to send children to Stevenson’s books.

In the Mathematics rooms, also, the range was bewildering. Arresting ideas for helping backward children to learn simple arithmetic vied with bright suggestions for the teaching of advanced trigonometry. History, music, science, arts and crafts, education and modern languages were only some of the other subjects represented. A visitor could well have spent days over this exhibition, and doubts as to the quality of work in emergency training colleges—if they still existed at that time—would have been set at rest.



## Chapter 6

### TRAINING THE MATURE STUDENT

ONE of the chief aims of the Mature Student is to provide a course of instruction which will enable the student to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for the successful performance of his job. This aim is achieved by the provision of a course of instruction which is designed to meet the needs of the student in his own work. The course is designed to be a practical course, one which will enable the student to apply the knowledge and skills which he acquires to his own work. The course is designed to be a course of instruction which will enable the student to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for the successful performance of his job.

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accepted nothing merely because they were told. Some of their criticism of the 'project' method in schools, for example, showed clearly this 'whole' view of the child. They were not satisfied that this method could give full play to all a child's sides.

Another discovery or re-discovery is that adults, in general, need quite desperately the personal refreshment and rejuvenation which an absorbing course like the emergency training course can give them, and respond to it *in fact* apart entirely from the professional qualification it gives them. A third discovery was that a great many more people, and of a far more richly constituted experience and background, than had been imagined can be attracted to the idea of teaching. A fourth, the fifth not fourth in order of importance, was that people of mature age, even though they lacked the normal academic qualifications, could, *if properly selected* by a relatively short period of training, be given the professional equipment and personal education necessary for successful teaching. A fifth was that such recruits bring a quite new attitude to teaching. That maturity enables students to absorb and use training more quickly than undeveloped youngsters with no experience of life has, of course, long been known. But there has never before been a note a wide range of teacher training deserving one with such older students. It, therefore, the experiences and discoveries of the emergency training college could be collected and extensively studied, almost certainly the results would make the transformation of pre-war ideas of teacher training. This would be a fortunate achievement. There is already evidence of a wide-spread tendency to reconsider the method and the content of courses in the permanent colleges. The Association of Teachers in Training Colleges and Departments of Education are holding many discussions about this in national, regional and district meetings. The new University Institutes of Education, too, are developing far-reaching schemes which should radically alter the whole pattern and method of teacher training.

Anxiety has been expressed, especially by the staffs of some of the earlier emergency training colleges, to close down, that apparently, no record was being kept of their work. But now, in addition to the Ministry's work on the records of



ago, Exhall Training College (formerly an emergency training college) was wholly turned over to courses for uncertificated teachers, and two other colleges are partially devoted to this work. Already, several hundreds of uncertificated teachers have received a year's training and the status of qualified teachers.

Interesting pioneer work has been done in colleges on this further adventure in training. Clearly, unqualified teachers, many of whom have been teaching for half a professional lifetime—and some for longer—will need a quite different training from either 'emergency' or 'permanent' students. It is intended that, as college space becomes available, all uncertificated teachers with between five and fifteen years of service shall be offered this professional training; and only if they accept it will they be allowed to continue to teach. Thus in the future—and entirely rightly—only qualified people, duly trained, will be allowed to enter the teaching profession.

The matter, then, of the training and qualification of the valuable older recruit is of the first importance. It is good that it has been so acknowledged. In the Minister's own words, 'The means of entry to the teaching profession for these older candidates was not available until the war gave rise to the Emergency Training Scheme. Now I hope that in peace-time we shall be able to develop something of a permanent scheme on these lines.'

The Minister has now advised local education authorities to help older candidates by part-time classes, and in any other way they can, to prepare themselves for college, and has expressed to Principals of permanent training colleges the hope that they would be attracted, rather than the reverse, by a break in a student's career between school and college. He has not, however, said that such students will be admitted to college without having passed the School Certificate examination.

This is a difficult question. The Emergency Training Scheme, as has been said, has shown clearly that in carefully selected cases academic lacks are more than compensated for. But doubts are being expressed to-day whether the intellectual and academic equipment of *some* of the emergency trained will be adequate to meet the demands of teaching. Ideally, a dif-

ferent form of entrance test would be the solution. This should generally be based on an individual approach to each candidate. Interesting work on these lines was done in the Services during the recent war. Psychological tests were evolved of great relevance to the individual's suitability to the particular job he wished to do. Some of the University Institutes of Education are said to be investigating at the present time the possibility of evolving a new form—a 'non-school certificate'—of qualification for acceptance by colleges.

What light has emergency training thrown on the desirable length of a teacher's training? The great thing it has shown is that the wider his experience and knowledge of *life*—not of a particular subject—and of other work, the more likely he is to need a shorter professional training than the raw youth. An example of how this inter-related experience can work is contained in some advice a hospital Sister of wide experience once gave her nurses: 'If you want to find out how good a doctor is, watch him with his medical students. A good doctor is almost invariably a good teacher.' There would certainly appear to be a relationship between one's knowledge of another profession and one's ability to teach.

The views of some of the outstanding emergency college Principals who have also had experience in the normal training colleges have been asked on this question of length of training. With startling unanimity, the answer has in every case been 'In the light of emergency training experience, I think that, for the mature student, two years would be the ideal, and for the young one, three years.' Though wonders have been done in the emergency training colleges with thirteen months' training, neither staff nor students feel it to be adequate.

Has emergency training, then, flooded the schools with the 'characters, not types' of Sir John Maud's vision? If it has achieved this, then it has done incomparably more than fill the gap it set out to fill. And a great part of its success will have been due to the individual thought and care which have been given to each student, the whole way through. From the days of the advisory committee's interim report to the working out in the colleges of an individual approach to each student's work, and, through them, to the children in the schools, the

scheme has been marked by this personal care over each student's particular work and special problems.

Emergency training must, through sheer weight of numbers, exercise a tremendous influence in the schools, one way or the other, during the coming years. By 1951, about one-fifth of all teachers in primary and secondary schools will be emergency trained. Will their lack of academic attainments (in the cases where it exists) depress standards in the schools? That this need not be the case was indicated by Dr. M. M. Lewis when, in August 1945, speaking of the first experimental emergency training class at Goldsmiths' College, he said: '. . . It is the considered opinion of the college that no relaxation of standards had been necessary, either in the academic work or in practical teaching. The least able of this particular group were of average standard, the best distinctly good.'

This group was, of course, chosen with scrupulous care, and was selected by the Principal and the Vice-Principal themselves, it may well be that therein lies in part the foundation of its success. Another group, that of the first year of emergency training at Borthwick College, was congratulated by distinguished visiting lecturers on the high intellectual level of its discussions. Yet the Principal has said that, 'judged by the results of standardized tests, there is not much difference between these students and those I have previously taught at two-year colleges'. If anything has been made clear by emergency training, it is that standardized methods cannot be successfully applied to the mature. An individual approach is necessary.

These are some of the direct results of the Emergency Training Scheme, and they are full of significance for the future of the profession, which it should undoubtedly permanently broaden and enrich. There are, already, indications of answers—provisional and tentative though they must be at this stage—to all these questions; but the final judgment of educationists on emergency training must await the results of several years. An invaluable piece of laboratory research is indicated here, which it is to be hoped the National Foundation for Educational Research, the National Union of Teachers, or the University Institutes of Education will undertake. The criteria



considered reliable for assessing the normally trained teacher need to be measured against greater maturity, age and experience, and a shorter training.

How can emergency training be woven into the structure of permanent teacher training? Here, again, there can at the present time be only the most tentative feeling towards an answer. But there appear to be three possible ways.

1. Separate colleges.
2. Separate departments in colleges.
3. A basic course of short duration, followed by more specialized courses to meet individual needs.

With reference to (1) it has been suggested that some of the larger emergency colleges might be retained for the training of older students ideally for a two-year course and for 'refresher' courses for emergency trained teachers.

Finally, is there anything in the experiences of the emergency training scheme which could be of help to other professions which are handicapped by shortages of personnel? No other profession has tackled its shortages on a nation-wide scale with such courage. And, if anything is clear, it surely is that such problems have got to be tackled in new ways, with a new outlook and a new concept of training.

Nursing, for instance. Would there have been a crisis in this profession if, at the time when the possibility first became apparent, an emergency training scheme for nurses had been launched of the scope of the one for teachers? No lowering of standards is envisaged by this suggestion: the training period could be greatly shortened by cutting out the domestic work irrelevant to professional training which so many student nurses have had to do until very recently.

It is true that the nursing profession has, here and there, done interesting and important experimental work in connection with part-time nursing, as, for example, the outstanding Gloucestershire scheme for the use of part-time nursing help. There have been other schemes, and it would seem that, through the time-honoured trial-and-error method, there may be a gradual progress towards the reforms needed.

But, while one has great sympathy with that method, is there

not something to be said, in given circumstances of great urgency, for a sudden, bold, imaginative step forward? An emergency training scheme for nurses, of the scope, imagination and courage of the one now concluding for teachers, would have been such a step. And it would probably have been highly successful, especially if emergency training's example had been followed, and older candidates also encouraged. There are many ex-V.A.D. nurses with excellent war records who, having attained to a considerable degree of skill in nursing, were much attracted to it as a permanent career. But many were lost to the profession by the discouraging fact that their previous training and experience did not take them an inch of the way towards qualification. Though women well on in their twenties and thirties, and even forties, and with valuable nursing experience, they must start on a level with the rawest probationer in her teens, who does not know a sterilizer from a gas-cylinder.

Nursing has been chosen as an example of the possibilities of emergency training for other professions, since it, like teaching, is a vocation rather than a career. There are many other possible applications. Domestic workers come to mind as another group. Domestic work has, in this country, all too rarely been regarded as a highly skilled occupation, requiring vocational training and a proper status in the community. That the government is aware of the crucial need for reform is clear from its support of the present limited 'try-out' of the National Institute of Houseworkers.

Though timid in its dimensions, this scheme is a start in the right direction. In 1948, 289 students were trained at N.I.H. centres. They are now, with their high degree of skill and their improved salaries and working conditions, helping to raise the status of the domestic worker. But imagine the effect on the community in general if, by a comprehensive training scheme for domestic workers who were really attracted to the work, the present difficulties of running homes could be resolved: a scheme which gave a first-rate training in the domestic arts and skills, and also the prospect of proper salaries, conditions of work and professional status.

The effect of this would not be confined to the domestic workers themselves. Any contribution which housewives may

have to make towards the wider life of the community is at present being stifled by the sheer physical wear and tear of doing two people's work in their own homes. Whitehead's 'uneducated clever women' are at present being ground down under another and very different 'horrible burden'. Their minds are being atrophied by the sheer hard labour of present-day housekeeping. Significantly, the Principal of a non-residential emergency training college for men declared that one of the disadvantages of a non-residential college was that many students, especially married ones, had far too many jobs to do when they got home: an alternative which they preferred, however, to seeing their wives broken down by overwork.

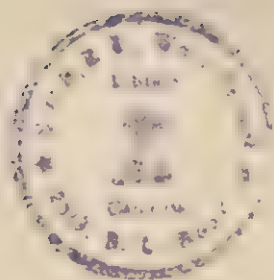
The Emergency Training Scheme for Teachers, quietly though it slipped into operation, has since attracted world-wide interest. Those who were present at the UNESCO seminar on the training of teachers, held at Ashridge College in Hertfordshire in 1948, and attended by representatives of thirty nations, were left in no doubt about that. Educationists on overseas lecture tours are inundated with questions about it; experts from many lands have eagerly studied it when in England. Its full achievement cannot yet be assessed but, in the opinion of those qualified to judge, it is already impressive and full of promise for the future.

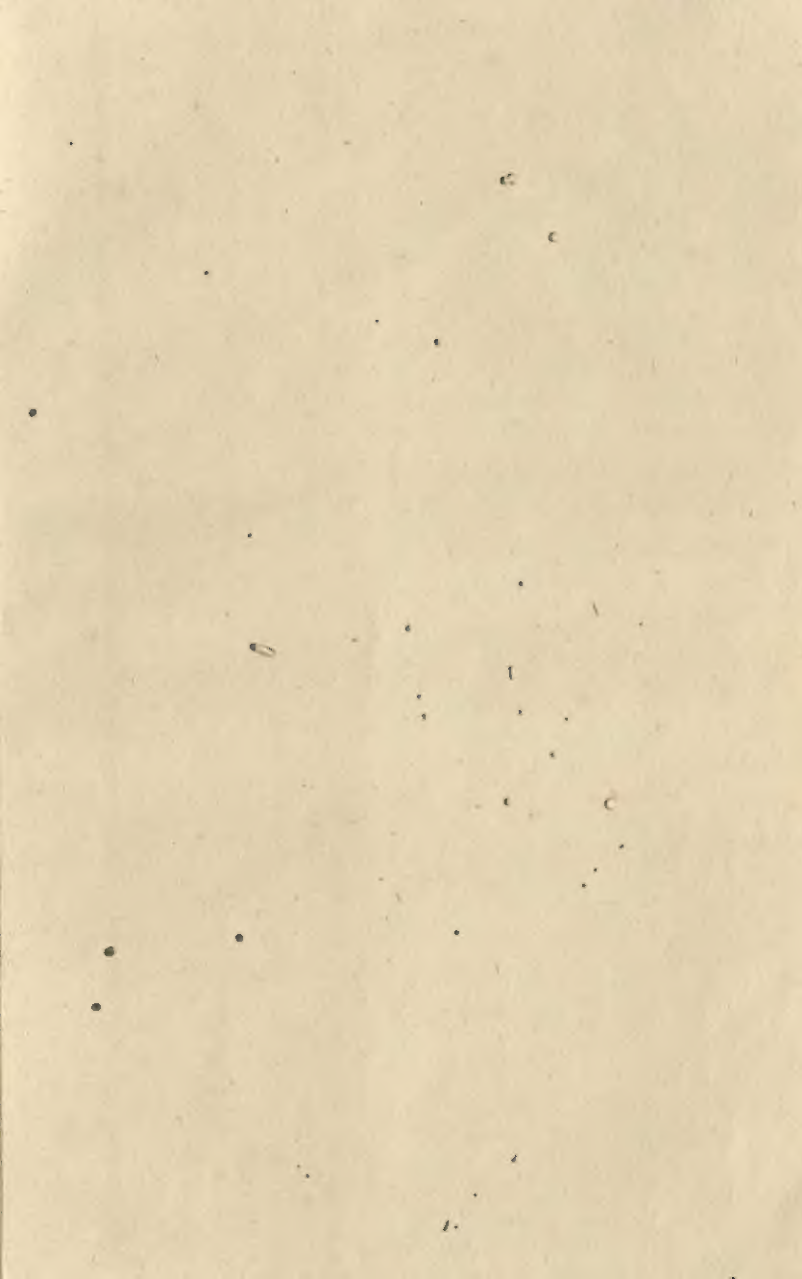
The achievement is due to the vision and courage of those who initiated the scheme, to the progressive and original minds of the Principals and staffs (it is to be hoped that these men and women will continue to find scope for and recognition of their valuable experience), to the quality and devotion of the students and to the creative and co-operative contributions of the Ministry of Education itself and of the local authorities. The promise rests on the belief that these mature students have begun the ideal people with whom to work out Sir Richard Livingstone's idea of the cross-fertilization of theory and experience; the pollen for such experimentation having been borne on the chance wind of stark necessity.

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